

FIQH-US-SEERAH

UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE OF PROPHET

MUHAMMAD



فقه السيرة

محمد الغزالـــي

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PREFACE

❑ There are many great personalities whose biographies people have read to savour the strokes of genius in them and to follow in admiration their ways of life and their attitudes towards the difficulties and problems which confronted them. The mere act of reading might be only link between these great personalities and those who know them and it might develop into a deep study or a strong human bond.

❑ I must hasten to say that I did not write about the greatest of all the personalities, Muhammad (ﷺ), 'Blessings and Peace be upon him' son of 'Abdullāh, with this limited concept in mind. I am a Muslim through knowledge: I know why I believe in Allāh (ﷻ) 'The Exalted', (Lord) of the Worlds, and in the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ), and why I follow the Book he brought to us. Indeed, I know why I call others to believe in all this which has brought tranquillity to my heart.

❑ I happen to have previously published a number of treatises on the life of Muhammad (ﷺ). Did I ever digress from it in anything which I wrote? All the treatises in which I discussed faith, morals, social behaviour and government, I depended heavily on the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) for their material. Thus I can truthfully say that this book is not a sudden link with the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ), nor is it a collection of proofs for his truthfulness, nor ideas which occurred to me about his genius. All that has been analysed at length elsewhere. In producing this book I had a specific objective in mind and I hope it has been achieved.

❑ The Muslims of today know only the surface layer of the life of Muhammad (ﷺ), which neither arouses emotions nor evokes resolutions. They extol the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions from inherited tradition and little knowledge, and think that verbal praise or some small act is sufficient.

❑ Such shallow knowledge of Muhammad (ﷺ) is equivalent to ignorance of him. It is unjust to the great reality that it should be turned into a legend. It will be injustice to that period of history,

which was pulsating with energy and strength, to be presented in the shrouds of the dead. The life of Muhammad (ﷺ) is not for Muslims, the entertainment of an idle person nor the study of a neutral critic. It is the most excellent example for them to follow, and the source of the laws by which they are governed. So any shortcomings in the presentation of this biography or any confusion in its sequence of events will be a terrible injury to the reality of faith itself.

❑ Thus I have done my utmost to give readers a true picture of the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) and I have made every effort to give the reasons and explanations for whatever took place during his life time. Then I have allowed the plain facts and their effects on minds without any bias or subterfuge. I have made good use of the biographies written by both ancient and modern scholars. The modern historians lean towards analysis, comparison, and the tying up of various events into a systematic whole. That is the best part of their method. However, the ancient historians rely on the collection of details, sifting of sources, and recording of small and big events. These numerous archives contain gems of importance if only proper use is made of them.

❑ Perhaps here I have blended the two methods in a new way which extracts the best from them both. From the details of the biography I have compiled a cohesive topic, all of whose parts are bound by one spirit. Then I arranged the texts and narrations in such a way as to conform with the unity of the topic and help to complete the whole picture. My aim was to make the biography into something which nurtures faith, purifies characters and fans the struggle, which encourages one to embrace the truth and be faithful to it and which contains a wealth of relevant examples.

❑ I wrote about the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) as soldiers would write about their general or employees about their employer or pupils about their teacher. I am not, as I have said, a neutral historian unrelated to whom I write about. Moreover, I wrote with the scenes of Muslim backwardness right in front of my

eyes. So do not be surprised if I relate the events of the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) in a manner which hints at our sorrowful state. Whenever I present a story I include in it references to the true sentiments, sound thoughts and noble actions of a Muslim to correct this terrible degradation.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) is not a story to be read on his birthday as many people do now, nor is he to be extolled in fabricated prayers added to the words of the *Adhān* (prayer call), nor can love for him be expressed in poems of praise which may make his admirers sigh when they hear them. The ties that Muslims have with the noble Prophet (ﷺ) are stronger and deeper than these deviations which have been thrust into the faith. The Muslims have indulged in these acts to express their relationship with their Prophet (ﷺ) only when they have neglected the essentials of their faith and contented themselves with outward manifestations and formalism. However, since these formalisms are limited in Islām they have resorted to inventing new forms.

❑ They should not innovate. To turn away from inventing formalities does not require much efforts. The effort that does require determination is to hold fast to the essence which has been neglected and return to the true faith. So instead of listening to the story of the Prophet's (ﷺ) birth being recited in a pleasant voice, one should get up and reform oneself in order to draw nearer to the Prophet's (ﷺ) practices in his worldly and spiritual life, in his likes and dislikes, in his knowledge and action, in his habits and forms of worship and in matters relating to war and peace. The Muslims in whose hearts the Prophet does not live and whose insight does not follow them in their actions and thoughts will never benefit by merely sending *Ṣalāh* and *Salām* to him a thousand times a day.

❑ I should like to emphasize here the necessity of separating seriousness from fun in our lives. It would be nice to fix a time for fun and relaxation and not exceed it and a time for seriousness and work and not fall short of it.

If people want to sing or listen to a song, let them do so. However turning Islām itself into a song, making the Qur'ān into beautiful tunes and the *sīrah* (life) (biography) into *qaṣīdahs* (poems) praising the Prophet and chants, have no justification and can be acceptable only to those who are negligent. This turnaround has been to the detriment of Islām since it was taken out of the field of behaviour and understanding into the field of play and entertainment. Those who do this are just the people described by the Qur'ānic *Āyah* (verse):

❴And forsake those who take their religion for a pastime and a jest, and whom the life of the world beguiles.❵ (Qur'ān 6: 70)

❑ The transformation of the Qur'ān into mere melodious chanting to which music lovers listen to is like the one what made the Jews and Christians broadcast it everywhere, confident that it would not revive the dead. The transformation of the Prophet's (ﷺ) life into stories, *qaṣīdahs* and unintelligible prayers has made listening to it a form of mental imbalance and eccentricity, which in my opinion stems from a perversion of the instincts, and a corruption of society. It would be much better for music lovers to listen to pure music. If they wish for serious work, they should seek it from pure sources, whether it be the Qur'ān which commands and prohibits, or the Sunnah which clarifies and explains so that it may be followed, or the *Sīrah* which gives the fragrance of pure literature, sound principles and upright politics. And that is Islām.

❑ I began writing these pages while I was in Madīnah in the holy precinct, which brought me good fortune for a while and assisted me in completing some useful studies on the Sunnah and the life of Muhammad (ﷺ). To Allāh (ﷻ) belongs the Grace for whatever bounties He (ﷻ) has bestowed on me and perhaps He (ﷻ) will make me of those who love Him and His Messenger (ﷺ). Now, since I can speak and act only with frankness, I must point out that the distance between the Muslims and their Prophet (ﷺ) is wide indeed, no matter what love for him they have in their hearts and what prayers they

offer for him. I saw them visiting his grave with zeal and yearning before returning to their homelands to find those who envy them for their good fortune and long for the same chance.

❑ No believer would dispute the fact that love for the Prophet (ﷺ) is compulsory and that love for him will vanish only from the heart of a stubborn hypocrite. How should one make this feeling expressed and show its allegiance to him. This is the question that needs explanation and clarification.

❑ Yathrib, from the point of view of general economics, is smaller than it was under the Aus and Khazraj in the pre-Islāmic days. The proportion of its land planted and cultivated today is one-tenth of what the Arabs used to plant and cultivate in the old days, the majority of the inhabitants today are those pilgrims and visitors who remained behind after the pilgrimage. They preferred to be near the Prophet (ﷺ) and unemployed rather than to go home and work! And they call this Hijrah!

❑ Is this Islām or love for the Prophet (ﷺ)? I remember meeting a group of Moroccans who claimed that they came to Madīnah to escape persecution for their faith. I explained to them that they were fleeing from the battlefront because their brothers were fighting the French invaders, and they were committing a crime in leaving them to bear the brunt of the struggle all by themselves.[1] Such a love for the Prophet (ﷺ) is incomprehensible and such a Hijrah to his Madīnah is unacceptable. The bond between the Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ) and the slaves of Allāh (ﷻ) is stronger and firmer than finding expression in such crooked, devious paths.

❑ The enemies of Islām were able to demolish the structure of Islām and turn it into ruins as a result of the negligence of the Muslims. How could the heritage of Muhammad (ﷺ) be left open to the vicissitudes of time? How could the early days of *Jahilīyah* be allowed to return? How could such a dangerous transformation be allowed to occur in silence? How could such a

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[1]The first Arabic edition of this book was published at a time when the French had occupied three regions of Morocco along with other Islāmic lands.

dangerous transformation be allowed to occur in the expressions of love for the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)? Let the Muslims therefore understand fully the life of their great Prophet (ﷺ). This would never occur if the Message itself were clearly understood and the life of the one who conveyed it is studied and his teaching strictly followed. How cheap is the love when it is only a talk! And how dear it is when it is ideal, safe and assured!

❑ I apologize for my inability to do proper justice to the subject. The Prophet's (ﷺ) importance is great, and explaining his life needs a sensitive mind and a sharp intellect. Let it suffice to know that this is my effort.

❑ O Allāh (ﷻ)! bless Muhammad (ﷺ) and the family of Muhammad (ﷺ) just as you blessed Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (عليه السلام) and the family of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (عليه السلام), and be bountiful to Muhammad (ﷺ) and the family of Muhammad (ﷺ) just as you were bountiful to Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (عليه السلام) and the family of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (عليه السلام). Verily You are the Praiseworthy, All-Glorious.

Muhammad Al Ghazālī

The Ḥādīths of this Book

❑ I was glad that this new edition was published after being reviewed by the great scholar of Ḥadīth, Sheikh Muhammad Naṣiruddīn Al-Albānī, who commented on the ḥādīths of this book. I hope that I may be able to help in bringing to light the scientific truth and a sifting of historical events by way of this criticism. My thanks to him who volunteered.

❑ The problem with the historians who document the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) and other events is their lack of verification and authentication. Many ancient as well as modern scholars fell into this trap, though there are some differences in their level of precision and observation. When I started to write the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) I strove to follow a sound method and rely only on trustworthy sources. I think I have achieved this aim and have gathered such material that would satisfy a keen researcher. However readers will see that Sheikh Naṣiruddīn's comments suggest that he doubts this is so. Thus I find myself compelled to clarify the method which I followed.

❑ The scholars of the Sunnah may differ in the authentication or rejection of a Ḥadīth. Sheikh Naṣiruddīn may argue that a Ḥadīth is weak, and he has the right to do so since he has a firm grounding in the knowledge of the Sunnah. The majority of Ḥadīth scholars may think that a Ḥadīth is weak. However I may look at its wording and find that it is in total agreement with a *āyah* (verse) of the Qur'ān or an authentic Ḥadīth and thereby find no harm in relating or writing it. As I see it, the Ḥadīth brings nothing new into the field of law or good deeds; it only explains what has already been fixed in the authentic sources.

❑ Take, for example, the first Ḥadīth which Sheikh Naṣiruddīn Judged to be weak: "Love Allāh (ﷻ) for the bounties He (ﷻ) bestows upon you and love me for the love of Allāh (ﷻ)". He may reject the authentication of this Ḥadīth by Al-Tirmidhī and Al-Ḥākim and he has the right to do so. However I found nothing in its meaning to prevent me from accepting it without hesitation.

❑ On the other hand, I hesitated to record the Ḥadīth of Muslim and Bukhārī in the way in which the Battle of the Bani Mustaliq took place. Their narrations of the Ḥadīth suggest that the Prophet (ﷺ) suddenly attacked that tribe without first offering them the *Dawah* or without any breaking of a treaty on their part or anything to rise suspicion occurring on their part or knowledge of any suspicious activities from their side.

❑ A battle began by the Muslims in such a manner finds disapproval in the logic of Islām, and is far removed from the character of the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus I refused to accept that the battle began and ended in this way. However, I was satisfied with the circumstances as narrated by Ibn Jarīr, who, in spite of the weakness of his narration as disclosed by Sheikh Naṣiruddīn, conforms to the assured principle of Islām of "no aggression except to the wrongdoers." As for those who are peaceful and unaware, there is no justification for attacking them.

❑ The Ḥadīth as narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim can have no other explanation than its being the description of the second phase of the incident. In other words, taking them by surprise came only after hostilities had begun between that tribe and the Muslims, and each one was lying in wait for the other. Thus it was the Muslims who saw the opportunity and attacked their enemy, and 'war is deception' in this case there must be some preface to Bukhārī's and Muslim's narration similar to what Ibn Jarīr reported and was criticized by Sheikh Naṣiruddīn.

❑ I am not the first to adopt such a line of approach. It is the approach adopted by most of the scholars when confronted by both weak and strong narrations. They agree that a weak Ḥadīth may be accepted so long as it is in conformity with the basic general principles, which are of course, derived from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. It was in the light of this balanced view that I related the Prophet's (ﷺ) consultation with Al Ḥabbāb on the occasion of the Battle of Badr, even though the Ḥadīth scholars declared its chain of narrators to be weak, because it comes

within the scope of the good deeds which Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) enjoined and there is no harm in relating it. This is so far as the weak ḥādīths are concerned.

❑ As for the authentic ḥādīths Sheikhs Naṣiruddīn knows quite well that there is wide scope in their diverse meanings to accept or reject them. There is no scholar who has not rejected some authentic ḥādīths in preference to what appears to be more authentic. May Allāh (ﷻ) prevent us from provoking controversy over the Sunnah, which is undoubtedly the second source of Islām.

❑ Nevertheless, if I study ḥādīths and find that, as a whole, they agree with the Qur'ān in principle that there was no war until after the *Da'wah* had been clearly conveyed, then how could I accept what suggests otherwise? Allāh (ﷻ) orders His Prophet (ﷺ) in the Qur'ān to say:

﴾Say: it is only inspired in me that your God is One God. Will you then surrender [to Him]? "But if they are averse then say: I have warned you all alike, although I know not whether near or far is that which you are promised."﴿ (Qur'ān 21: 108-109)

❑ After this announcement, which is directed to both the callers and the called, and after the wars of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the righteous caliphs, in which they adopted this method of explaining the Message and allowing the people the opportunity of accepting or rejecting it, I do not think that anyone could force me to accept what the two Sheikhs (Bukhārī and Muslim) reported on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Aun. He said:

I wrote to Nāfi', May Allāh (ﷻ) bless him, asking him about the supplication before fighting. He replied that, that was in the early days of Islām, when the Prophet (ﷺ) attacked the Banū Muṣṭaliq unawares and killed their fighters and took their women captive, and it was then that he took Juwairiyyah as wife. He said that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), who was in the army, told him about it.

❑ Just as I bypassed this Ḥadīth, I also bypassed another, which stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his Companions and informed them of the persecutions which would take place until the Day of Judgement and those who would be responsible for them. It has been proved from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah that the Prophet (ﷺ), did not know the unseen in this strange, detailed and comprehensive manner.

❑ I preferred this method of writing the biography so I accepted the narrations whose wordings conformed to the fixed principles and laws, even if their chains of narrators were not sound. I rejected those ḥādīths which were described as authentic, because they did not conform to the fixed principles and laws according to my understanding of Allāh's religion and the methodology of the *Da'wah*.

❑ There is no space to comment on all my reasons for differing with Sheikh Naṣiruddīn over certain things. Nevertheless, there is space to record all of his comments on the sources I have used, since I very much appreciate his profound scholarship, and he represents a well stet founded point of view, in the sifting of religious matters. I also think that it is the readers' right to know the opinion of one of the meticulous researchers on the narrations which I have utilized here. It does not matter whether I disagree with him or not. May Allāh (ﷻ) reward him for his efforts to protect the heritage of the Prophet (ﷺ) and May He (ﷻ) guide us all to the straight path.

Ḥadīth Terminology

The two Sheikhs	: Bukhārī and Muslim.
Isnād or *Sanad*	: The chain of narrators.
Matn	: The actual text of the Ḥadīth.
Ṣaḥīḥ	: An authentic Ḥadīth whose *Isnād* is complete without any deficiency and whose narrators are absolutely trustworthy and accurate.
Ḥasan	: A good Ḥadīth whose *Isnād* is complete without any deficiency and whose narrators are absolutely trustworthy but may not be very accurate.
Ḍa'īf	: Weak. There are different categories of weak Ḥadīth, of which all those listed below are examples.
Mursal	: The name of the *Ṣaḥabī* who heard it from the Prophet is omitted.
Munqaṭi'	: A name in the *Isnād* is omitted or an unknown name is mentioned.
Mu'addal	: Two or more names are omitted from the *Isnād*.
Tadlīs or *Mudallas*	: (1) The narrator gives the impression that he/she heard it directly from one of his/her contemporaries, although that is not so. (2) The narrator ascribes qualities to the person from whom he/she heard it which that person does not possess.
Mu'allal	: Apparently sound, but there is a hidden weakness in it.
Shādh	: A single trustworthy person narrates it, contrary to what other authentic sources have narrated.

Munkar	: An untrustworthy person narrates it, contrary to what comes from authentic sources.
Gharīb	: At one point in its chain there is a single narrator.
Ḥasan Gharīb	: A Ḥadīth which has the attributes of both *Ḥasan* and *Gharīb*.
Mawḍū	: A fabrication by liars who ascribe it to the Prophet (ﷺ). This is, strictly speaking, not a Ḥadīth.

Note: Pickthall's translation has been used for all the quotations from the Qur'ān except in a few cases where the context required a different translation.

Chapter One

A Message and a Leader

Paganism Ruled the Ancient Civilizations

The history of the mankind is sorrowful. Ever since Ādam (ﷺ), May Peace be upon him, and his children descended on earth, as time went by and civilizations flourished and generations rose on the remains of others, humans have been a motley mixture. If one day they are on the right track, they are lost for days soon after, and if they see the light of truth once, then the darkness of falsehood engulfs them many times (thereafter). If we were to scrutinize the history of the mankind in the light of belief in Allāh (ﷻ) and preparation for the Hereafter, we should find the world closely resembling a drunkard whose periods of drunkenness exceed his sobriety, or a sick man who is delirious and does not know what he says.

❑ Although in experiences with themselves and their world, there are men's many deterrents from committing evil and many incentives to do good, but overwhelming passion cannot be subdued by knowledge alone.

❑ How much of the world's life expired before the appearance of Muhammad (ﷺ)? Many centuries brought a wealth of experience and knowledge and encouraged the growth of the arts and sciences, philosophies and ideas. In spite of that, however, frivolity became the rule and many nations fell without achieving the status to which they aspired.

❑ Look at the fate of the civilizations of Egypt and Greece, India and China, Persia and Rome. I do not mean their fate from the political point of view, but from the aspect of feelings and reason. Contemptible paganism destroyed them and made them fall into this miserable pit. And the human being, whom Allāh (ﷻ) appointed as His superior vicegerent in the heavens and on the earth, became a slave subservient to the lowliest thing in

these places. What else could there be after cows and calves are hallowed, wood and stones are worshipped? Entire nations became polluted with such perversions. Paganism comes from within the self and not from the environment. Just as sad people apply their feelings to their surroundings and frightened people imagine objects to be ghosts, similarly deformed personalities will apply their stupidity and sterility to their surroundings, and deify the stones and the animals.

❑ Only when the small heart widens, the dormant thought awakens and people return to their lofty ideals, these pagan impressions will disappear automatically. Thus, the first work for the faith is within men and women themselves, for it is of no benefit in the fight against paganism simply to slaughter the holy cows and smash the proud idols while hearts remain in their previous darkness. The worshippers will just search for other gods to bow before and make offerings. There are many pagans in this world, though they have never met over an altar, and how quickly they ignore the real presence of their Lord and run after some new illusion.

❑ Superstition does not follow its course in life by announcing its falsehood and exposing its nonsense. It conceals its shamelessness with the clothing of earnestness. It borrows the accepted wear of truth and may even adopt some of its premises and conclusions before adorning itself for the gullible. This is how paganism acts. It attacks the true religion and its plain realities, not as the bee attacks the flowers of spring, but as the worms break down and waste a fertile soil. Or locusts attack the luxurious gardens and turn them into barren wastelands. Now, if it corrupts what it leaves, then it will not correct what it takes, and if what it takes was good before it reached it, then it will become harmful after it has been turned into poison in its stomach. This is the secret why paganism, which does not know Allāh (ﷻ), claims to come closer to Him and seek His pleasure through its idols: a portion of truth in portions of falsehood, in a context which definitely diverts people from Allāh (ﷻ) and removes them from Allāh's presence.

❑ The greatest catastrophe which befell the religions on account of the pagan attack on them was the terrible changes affecting the religion of Isā (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). They turned its day into darkness and its peace into distress; they turned unity into idolatry, degraded the human race and hung its upliftment on a sacrifice. They turned the ideology of Jesus into a hotchpotch of unnatural beliefs, myths and legends. The myth of the Trinity and redemption was revived after early paganism succeeded in thrusting it upon the new Christianity. In this way it gained two victories: it strengthened itself and it led others astray. Thus when the sixth century of the Christian era arrived, the lights of guidance throughout the world had gone out and Satan was traversing the vast expanses of land, admiring the thorns he had planted and seeing how sturdy they had grown.

❑ Magianism in Persia was stubborn vanguard of the widespread idolatry in China, India, the Arab countries and all parts of the ignorant globe. Christianity, which vehemently opposed it, borrowed most prominent characteristics feature the myths of the ancient Indians and Egyptians. It ascribed a wife and a child to Allāh (ﷻ) and seduced its followers in Rome, Egypt and Constantinople with a kind of polytheism more advanced than that of the fire-worshippers and the idol-worshippers: a polytheism mixed with monotheism and fighting pure polytheism! What is the value of these contradictions which Christianity collected together?

﴾They [Jews, Christians and pagans] say: "Allāh has begotten a son [children]." Glory is to Him! He is Rich [Free of all needs]. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. No warrant you have for this. Do you say against Allāh what you know not. Say: "Verily, those who invent a lie against Allāh will never be successful" [A brief] enjoyment in this world! And then unto Us will be their return, then We shall make them taste the severest torment because they used to disbelieve [in Allāh, belie His Messengers, deny and challenge His *Āyāt* [proofs, signs, verses, etc]. ﴿ (Qur'ān 10: 68-70)

❑ It seems that the bond of polytheism which linked the pagan religions to the distorted heavenly religions is what made them allies in the bid to destroy the Muslims from the day the latter began establishing their community on the basis of the worship of the One True God. Allāh (ﷻ) cautioned this Ummah on the persecution which would befall them from the idol-worshipers and from the People of the Book at the same time, and He advised them to fortify themselves with patience and steadfastness in the face of this intolerance:

﴾Assuredly you will be tried in your property and in your persons, and you will hear much wrong from those who were given the Scripture before you, and from the idolators. But if you persevere and ward off [evil], then that is of the steadfast heart of things.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 186)

❑ The darkness which engulfed the hearts and minds in the absence of the lights of *tawhīd* contained in it also traditions of society and the systems of government. Thus the earth was a den haunted by murder and destruction where the weak had no hope of peace and tranquillity. And what good could be expected from paganism which rejected reason, forgot Allāh (ﷻ) and yielded to the hands of imposters?

❑ It would not be strange if Allāh (ﷻ) refused to help them, as the Ḥadīth says:

"Allāh (ﷻ) verily looked at the people on earth and detested them all, both Arabs and non-Arabs except some remnants of the People of the Book." (From a long Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim)

It was these remains which were impenetrable by polytheism in spite of the tidal wave of unbelief which flooded the hills and valleys. Before the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ), the world was drowned in confusion and misery which weighed heavily on people's shoulders.

You came, while the people were in chaos: if you had passed by them you would have seen them worshipping idol upon idol.

The king of Rome oppressed his people and the king of Persia was deaf and blind from pride.

Finally Allāh (ﷻ) announced that He (ﷻ) would wipe out these traces and send His (ﷻ) choicest guidance to creation. He (ﷻ) sent Muhammad (ﷺ).

The Nature of the Final Message

The prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) had the unique characteristic of being global and eternal. Allāh (ﷻ) was capable of sending a warner to every village and a guide in every age. Now if the towns are always in need of warners and the ages in need of guides, then why were they substituted by a single man? The truth is that this substitution resembles the brevity which contains many meanings in just a few words. The prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) was a complete substitution for the sending of an army of prophets distributed throughout the ages and the wide world. In fact, it filled the need for sending an angel to every person who lived and will live on this earth for as long as people look forward to guidance and salvation.

❑ How is that? On a dangerous ground a sincere adviser may tell you: "Close your eyes and follow me," or, "Do not ask me about anything which arouses your attention." Safety may be in obeying him, thus you would prefer to walk behind him until you cross into a safe territory. In this case he is your appointed guide, who thinks and sees for you and who takes you by your hand. If he dies, so do you. However, if at the beginning a wise person comes to you, maps the itinerary, warns you of the dangerous places, shows you in detail what stages and difficulties you have to pass through and walks with you for a while in order to give you practical guidance in what you have learnt, then, in this case, you would be your own guide capable of relying on your own sight and reasoning. The first case is suited to children and simple-minded people, but the second case is to be applied when dealing with people of understanding.

❑ When Allāh (ﷻ) sent Muhammad (ﷺ) to guide the world, He ensured that the message contained the principles which would open doors for intelligent people to understand what was and what would be. The Qur'ān which He (ﷻ) sent down on the Prophet's (ﷺ) heart is a Book from the Lord of the Worlds to all living people to guide them to goodness and inspire them with uprightness. Muhammad (ﷺ) was not a leader of tribes, people who were good because he was good, and when he died they faded away. He was a force of goodness which played a role in the moral world similar to the role played in the material world by the discovery of steam and electricity. His appointment as Prophet (ﷺ) represented a stage in the evolution of the mankind. Before that, people under the guardianship of their keepers were like confined children. Then they grew up and became capable of bearing responsibility themselves. So Allāh's message came to them, through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ), and explained how they should live on earth and return to heaven. Thus whether Muhammad (ﷺ) remained or went away, it would not take anything away from his real Message which opened eyes and ears and sharpened perceptions and minds, and it was all contained in his huge legacy of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

❑ He was not sent to collect a set of people around him but to forge a link between creation and the truth by which their existence would be meaningful; between them and the light by which they would see their goal. So those who recognize the truth in their lives and walk among people with a light, have definitely acknowledged Muhammad (ﷺ), have taken shelter under his banner, even if they have never seen nor lived with their guide.

﴾O mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof [Prophet Muhammad] from your *Rabb*, and We sent down to you a manifest light [this Qur'an]. So, as for those who believed in Allah and held fast to Him, He will admit them to His Mercy and Grace [i.e. Paradise], and guide them to Himself by the Straight Path.﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 174-175)

So if you see children ignoring their teacher's lessons or clinging to his clothes while he is alive or holding onto his belongings after he is dead, then know that he is unworthy children. He is not fit to be addressed by the teaching of the Message, let alone standing firmly on its path.

❑ In the Prophet's (ﷺ) mosque in Madīnah I saw throngs of people seeking proximity to his grave and longing to spend their lives beside it. If the Prophet (ﷺ) came out alive and saw them he would abhor the sight of them and hate to be near them. Their shabby appearance, their lack of knowledge, their idleness and negligence, make their relationship with the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ) weaker than the web of a spider.

❑ I said to them: "what do you gain from being near the Prophet (ﷺ) and what does he gain from you?"

❑ Those who understand his Message and live it beyond the sands and seas know the secret of the Prophet (ﷺ) better than you. It is a spiritual and mental proximity above which forms the only bond between Muhammad (ﷺ) and those who are related to him. So how could sick spirits and feeble minds be related to him who came to deposit the good health of religion and the world in the spirits and minds? Is this proximity the sign of love and the means of forgiveness? You will never love for Allāh's sake unless you first know Allāh (ﷻ). The natural sequence is that before anything else you should know who is your *Rabb* and what is your faith. When you know this with a clean mind you will appreciate with a grateful heart the kindness of the one who conveyed the Message of Allāh (ﷻ) to you an bore hardships on your account. That is the meaning of the Ḥadīth: "Love Allāh (ﷻ) for the bounties He (ﷻ) provides you with and love me for the love of Allāh (ﷻ)"; And the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse:

﴾Say [O Muhammad to mankind]: If you [really] love Allāh, then follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive you of your sins. Allāh often is oft-Forgiving, All-Merciful.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 31)

❑ Then again, the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ) did not appoint himself as a "gateway" for forgiveness and blessings. He never did so for a single day, because he was never implicated in swindling. He tells you either to go with him or go along with someone else, and let us all stand before Allāh (ﷻ) and pray to Him (ﷻ):

﴾You [Alone] we worship, and you [Alone] we ask for help [for each and everything]. Show us the straight path; The path of those whom you have favoured; Not the path of those who deserve your anger nor of those who go astray.﴿ (Qur'ān 1: 5-7)

So if this Prophet (ﷺ) is pleased with you, he will pray to Allāh (ﷻ) for you: and if you are pleased with him and acknowledge his great work and status in your heart, then pray to Allāh (ﷻ) for him likewise. You will be participating with the angels, who recognize his greatness and pray for his increased reward:

﴾Look! Allāh and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. You who believe! Ask for blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 56)

❑ It is not Muhammad's task to drag you to paradise with a rope. His task is only to implant insight into your heart to see the truth within. His means of doing that is a Book which falsehood can never approach either from infront or behind, which is easy to remember and safe from deviation. That is the secret of the permanency in his message.

❑ Let us see, therefore, how the Prophet (ﷺ) treated the environment in which he was born, in the light of this essential nature of his message, and let us before that look at the conditions of this environment itself.

The Arabs at the Advent of Islām

The people of Makkah were weak in thought, and strong in desire, since there is no relationship between the maturity of thought and the maturity of instinct, nor between the backwardness of societies in their intellect and the backwardness in lust and desire. The viciousness of desire and lust which we hear about in Paris and Hollywood is not much more than what was experienced in the past centuries when corruption was spread over the surface of the globe. The advance of civilization has had no effect from this point of view except to increase the means of gratification. The desires themselves remain the same before and after the flood [of the time of Nooh (Noah) (ﷺ)]. Selfishness, greed, showing off quarrelling and jealousy, as well as all the other despicable qualities, filled the world of old, al though through the ages they appeared in different clothing. You can see in the primitive village or among members of a simple tribe rivalry for wealth an status exists as it exists in the most modern societies. Many people may lack vast reserves of knowledge and virtue but they never lack vast reserves of trickery, ambition and intrigue. You may be astonished at people who do not understand a problem just under their noses whereas they understand that so-and-so is no better than they.

❑ From the time of (Nooh) (ﷺ), life contained a fair amount of such stupidity and stubbornness. Thus when Nooh's (ﷺ) people were invited to believe in Allāh (ﷻ) alone, their response to Nooh (ﷺ) showed no concern for the subject-matter of the invitation. All they cared about was the person who extended the invitation and the high status he would acquire with this message:

﴾But the chieftains of his folk, who disbelieved, said: this is only a mortal like you who would make himself superior to you. Had Allāh willed, He surely could have sent down angels.﴿ (Qur'ān 23: 24)

❑ There are many openings for personal desire to influence one's actions and the effects of desire on morals are very complicated. Among the violent waves of desire and sin and the people living in that environment were prominent examples of strong passion and paralysed thought, or thought which developed under the shadow and in the service of uncontrolled passion. Disbelief in Allāh (ﷻ) and the Last Day, concern for the pleasures of the world and engrossment in the satisfaction of them, strong desire for supremacy, grandeur and authority, fickle prejudices which wage war or make peace for these desires: they are the inherited traditions which direct the material and moral activities of the individual in this limited sphere.

❑ It is a mistake to think of Makkah in those days as a village, cut off from civilization and in a desolate desert, aware of nothing in the world except the necessities which barely kept the body alive. On the contrary, it had its fill until it ran wild, disputed its arrogance until it crushed itself, and ungodliness sank deep into its being until it became almost impossible to extract it. The people were either blind to the truth or denied it. In this society which had never any sort of intellectual civilization, the individual's pride reached such an extent that there could be found those who vied with Pharaoh in his tyranny and arrogance.

❑ 'Amr ibn Ḥishām said, justifying his disbelief in the Message of Muhammad (ﷺ):

"We rivalled the Banū 'Abd Manāf for honour and prestige until when we resembled two racehorses, they said: "Among us there is a Prophet who receives revelations. By God, we shall not believe in him and we shall never follow him unless we receive revelations too, just like him."

❑ It is claimed that Al Walīd ibn Al Mughīra said to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ): "If prophethood were true then I should have a priority to it rather than you, since I am older and have more wealth than you."

❑ Such arrogant stupidity was not displayed by Makkah alone: in Madīnah, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy's disbelief was for similar reasons.

After the Ḥijrah Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) went to visit Sa'd ibn'Ubādah during his sickness before the Battle of Badr. He rode a donkey and had Usāmah ibn Zaid behind him. They rode until they passed by a gathering of people in which was 'Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy. The gathering contained a mixture of Muslims, idolators and Jews, and among the Muslims was 'Abdullāh ibn Rawaha.

When the dust from the animal reached the gathering 'Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy covered his nose with his cloak and said: "Do not throw dust on us."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) greeted them and then stopped and dismounted. He called them to Allāh (ﷻ) and recited the Qur'ān to them. 'Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy said: "Hey man, there is nothing better than what you say. If it is the truth then don't annoy us with it in our gatherings. Go back to your mount, and whoever comes to you, tell him about it."

❑ 'Abdullāh ibn Rawaha said: "On the contrary O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), bring it to us in our gatherings. We love that." Thereupon the Muslims, idolators and Jews began to abuse each other until they were on the verge of coming to blows. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) continued to pacify them until they calmed down.

❑ Then he mounted and rode off and when he reached Sa'd ibn Ubadāh he said: "Did you hear what Ibn Ḥibbān (that is, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubāyy) said?"

❑ Sa'd asked what he said and the Prophet (ﷺ) told him. Then Sa'd said: "You must pardon him, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), for by Him who revealed the Book to you, Allāh (ﷻ) has given you the truth which He (ﷻ) revealed to you. The people of this lake (Madīnah) had assembled to crown him and tie a band (of

honour) on his head. But when Allāh (ﷻ) prevented that with the truth He gave you, he was outmatched by that. And that is what made him do what you saw."[1]

❑ Ibn Ubāyy was tormented by Islām since he saw it, as a threat to his leadership, and it was the same with Abū Jahl before. Now, if these people turned away from the truth after understanding it clearly, there are thousands of others who, although they do not understand Islām, hate it and fight against it.

❑ Amid these simple or compound forms of ignorance and these deliberate or misguided hostilities, amid innumerable examples of misguidance and unawareness, Islām began to spread its rays little by little until it took a whole nation out of darkness into light, in fact, Islām turned that nation into a brilliant lamp which provided illumination and guidance. The lessons which caused this amazing transformation and which raised tribes and nations from the Nadir to the Zenith were not medicine for a particular time or a specific set of people. They were essential cures for human nature whenever it got out of hand, and they shall remain as long as humans remain, and they shall ennoble them and resuscitate life.

A Teacher Messenger

The news had spread among the followers of the previous Scriptures that the time for the appearance of a Prophet (ﷺ) had drawn near and this had its justifications. The people were accustomed to receiving one Prophet after another without too long a wait in between, and it often happened that prophets existed in the same age and lived in the same or neighbouring regions. After Jesus, however, the situation had changed. Almost six centuries had passed since his ministry and a new Prophet was yet to be seen.

❑ When the world became crammed with vice and corruption,

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[1] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī with the explanation of *Fatḥ al Bari.* It is also narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad from the Ḥadīth of Usāma Ibn Zayd.

the eagerness for the awaited reformer increased. There were men who detested the prevailing ignorance and were looking forward to this noble position, wishing that they would be chosen for it. Among them was Umayyah Ibn Al Ṣalt, whose poetry was full of references to Allāh (ﷻ) and the praise that was due to Him. So much so that the Prophet (ﷺ) said of him: "Umayyah was about to accept Islām.[2]

❑ 'Amr Ibn al Sharīd reported from Umayyah:

I was riding behind the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) one day and he said:

"Do you know any poem of Umayyah ibn al Ṣalt? I Said yes, so he said recite it. I recited a couplet, and he asked me to continue reciting until I had recited a hundred couplets."

However, Providence ignored these aspiring poets and revolutionaries and imposed the great trust on a man who never aspired for it nor had any thought of it:

﴾You had no hope that the Scripture would be inspired in you; but it is a mercy from your Lord, so never be a helper to the disbeliever.﴿ (Qur'ān 28: 86)

Selection for the great roles do not come about by aspiration for them but by the strength to bear them. There are many people in life who desire but possess only the ability to desire, and there are many staunch people who remain silent but when they are given the trust they perform miracles with it.

❑ No one knows the capacities of individuals except their Creator, and He (ﷻ) who wants to guide the entire world will choose for this great task a noble soul. The Arabs in their *jahilīyah* regarded Muhammad (ﷺ) with respect, for they saw in his character the signs of perfect manhood. However, they never thought for one moment that the future of life would be tied to his future, and that wisdom would burst forth from that

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[2]A sound Hadīth narrated by Muslim and Ibn Majāh from Abū Huraira (ﷺ). They also narrated it from Ibn al Sharīd as the completion of the following Hadīth.

pure mouth and traverse the deserts and the jungles, the hills and the plains. They saw of him only what a child sees of the surface of the sea: he is fascinated with the calm surface and knows nothing of its depths. Allāh's selection of Muhammad (ﷺ) was a surprise, but after the initial shock disappeared he braced his strong shoulders to bear the burden that was to be thrust on him. Thereafter, he applied himself to his task with clarity and Allāh's assistance.

❑ For 23 years the Revelation descended upon him, each set of *Āyāt* (verses) being revealed according to circumstances and events. This long, vibrant period was one of learning and teaching. Allāh (ﷻ) taught His Prophet (ﷺ), who in turn received these interesting sciences and turned them over in his mind until they became a part of his being. Then he taught them to the people, and captivated their souls with the depth and beauty of their message. The Revelation of the Qur'ān over this long period was done by the Creator to provide a cure for ailing souls, to establish His (ﷻ) laws in the hearts and souls of people and to construct a new social order. The Qur'ān's harmony in its goals and meanings over such a long time is considered to be one of the aspects of its miraculous nature. The last portions to be revealed after almost a quarter of a century came in total conformity and harmony with its early portions, one complementing and reinforcing the other as if they had all been revealed at the same time. The Arabs wondered why the Qur'ān was revealed in that way:

﴾And those who disbelieve say: "Why is not the Qur'ān revealed to him all at once?" Thus [it is sent down in parts], that We may strengthen your heart thereby. And We have revealed it to you gradually, in stages. [It was revealed to the Prophet in 23 years]. And no example or similitude do they bring [to oppose or to find fault in you or in this Qur'ān], but We reveal to you the truth [against that similitude or example], and the better explanation thereof.﴿
(Qur'ān 25: 32-33)

❑ The Qur'ān explains the real nature of the faith as Allāh (ﷻ) made it and the history of this faith. In its general call it presents the doubts and answers them. It brings its proofs with clear understanding of its opponents' views. It follows all the accusations made against it to the farthest extent and then it presents its evidence and destroys all the accusations. The Qur'ān began among the people in whose hearts disbelief was firmly rooted and on whose tongues argument was ready. It was as if fate had chosen this environment to be the society representing the lowest level of doubt that could enter the heart and the most extensive challenge that falsehood could pose. Thus if Islām succeeded in dispelling these doubts and overcoming these hurdles, then it would be even more capable of facing the other challenges which are of a lesser degree.

❑ Those questions which were directed to the Prophet or were expected to be directed to him in relation to their varying beliefs and laws found satisfactory answers in the Qur'ān, with the understanding that the question represented not only the need of the questioner but also the need of the mankind at all times. In this atmosphere full of questions, requests for clarification, or challenges, Revelation came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the words: "Say this" or "Say that". There are many *Āyāt* (verses) which begin with this command in reply to a question asked or assumed. When you read these elaborate answers, you feel a wave of certainty flowing into your heart as if the misgivings you harboured or were likely to harbour had been swept away. These strong bonds are what tie the eternal Message to the conscience of the people. The Qur'ān is a living messenger: you ask it and it answers you; you listen to it and it satisfies you.

❑ Look how it establishes the concept of the resurrection, reward and punishment; how it stresses the comprehensiveness of Allāh's will and power in the course of an answer to a question asked. Look how the concepts are interwoven in a give and take, in an objection and rebuttal as if it were a flowing discussion which extended farther than the immediate speaker and affected all the mankind to the end of time.

﴾Does not man see that We have created him from *Nuṭfah* [mixed male and female sexual discharge – semen drops]. Yet behold he [stands forth] as an open opponent. And he puts forth for Us a parable. And forgets his own creation. He says "Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?" Say: [O Muhammad] "He will give life to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation!" He Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold you kindle therewith. Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth, Able to create the like of them? Yes, indeed! He is the All-knowing Supreme Creator. Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!- and it is! So glorified is He and exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things: and to Him you shall be returned.﴿ (Qur'ān 36: 77-83)

❑ This is one example of reasoning based on accurate vision. It is not specific for one age or one place. It is addressed to the general intellect in all the mankind and it is an explanation of the wisdom behind the Revelation of the Qur'ān in installments. The *Āyāt* (verses) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the order "say such-and-such" in reply to the questions put to him during his efforts to call mankind to Allāh (ﷻ). Then both the question and the answer are recorded, so that the knowledge thus gained may benefit mankind till the end of time. The command to "say" attracted the concern of the scholars: It is an instruction from Allāh (ﷻ) to His Messenger (ﷺ) and an instruction from the Messenger (ﷺ) to the people; and after this command came the statements which contained all that Allāh (ﷻ) wished of advice, exhortations and regulations.

❑ When the idolators wanted as was their custom to transfer the field of dispute from the real nature of the faith to the person of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers, the following *Āyāt* (verses) were revealed:

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: "Have you thought; whether Allāh causes me [Muhammad] and those with me to perish or has mercy on us, still, who will protect the disbelievers from a painful doom?" say: "He is the Beneficent. In Him we believe and in Him we put our trust. And you will soon know who it is that is clearly in error."﴿ (Qur'ān 67: 28-29)

Look how He extracts the marrow from amid the dust of argument! What good would it do to you if Muhammad (ﷺ) and all those with him were wiped out? Just think how superstitions destroyed you and diverted you from the straight path! It is not the duty of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions to think about themselves and their good fortune. They are simply callers to the Beneficent: they believe in Him and put their trust in Him. So if you want, the way to the Beneficent, it is prepared and easy!

❑ It is not necessary for a question to be asked for the answer "Say" to come from Allāh (ﷻ). It may be that the method used to present the principles and etiquette of the *da'wah* requires this kind of opening. Thus the purpose behind it would be to explain the need for Islām and the Prophet in such a clear and satisfactory manner that all doubts are uprooted before they are born.

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: "Truly, my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a right religion, the religion of Ibrahīm [Abraham], *Hanifa* [i.e. the true Islāmic Monotheism – to believe in One God [Allāh i.e. to worship none but Allāh, Alone]and he was not of *Al-Mushrikūn* [Polytheists]. Say [O Muhammad]: "Verily, my *Ṣalāt* [prayer], my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allāh, the Lord of the *'ālamīn* [mankind, jinn and all that exists]. "He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." Say: "Shall I seek a lord other than Allāh, while He is the Lord of all things? No person earns and [sins] except against himself [only], and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another. Then unto your Lord is your return, so He will tell you that wherein you have been differing."﴿ (Qur'ān 6: 161-164)

This address to the Prophet (ﷺ) implies a command to all living beings in his era as well as the era of the afterwards to contemplate with their intellect what is being revealed to him and judge with their consciences the extent of its accuracy and sincerity. Thus If one's heart is full of faith, it is faith in the Lord of everything and the Prophet's (ﷺ) task ends at this point: when the intellect and heart arrive at their Creator and the straight path becomes clear to them. After that every man and women must (themselves) bear the consequences of the good or evil that they do.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) is not an intermediary who bears for you the good you performed, nor a sacrificial victim who bears for you the punishment you deserve. Herein lies the deep gulf between Christianity and Islām. Islām rates highly the value of humans and gives them their appropriate reward according to their righteousness or depravity. In Christianity, however, humans are too lowly to have direct access to the Lord of the Worlds: there must be another whom they can approach and who accepts their repentance. And who is that other? An adopted son! If people confess to sins, it is not they who face the penalty: the sacrifice was offered in a past age for these sins, and they must believe in that if they want to gain salvation! This insanity is in need of heavy drag lines to travel through life opposed to logic and justice.

❑ In Islām, Allāh (ﷻ) tells His Prophet (ﷺ) something which opens up the eyes and intellect:

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" Say: "Allāh!" Say: "Do you then take [others] beside Him for protectors who can neither benefit nor hurt even themselves?" Say: "is the blind man equal to the sighted man, or is darkness equal to light?" Or assign they to Allāh partners who created the like of His creation so that creation [which they made and His creation] seemed alike to them? Say: "Allāh is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Almighty."﴿ (Qur'ān 13: 16)

These questions come one after the other like whiplashes which sting falsehood, awaken the sleeper and spur humankind to embrace the truth and rise high with it. This is what the Messenger of Islām (ﷺ) proclaimed and worked for.

❑ Islām encountered the strongest opposition from the paganism of that time. It did not breathe its last after a battle or two; instead it fought hard for every handful of earth. After the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) it was thought that paganism had exhausted its strength. On the contrary, it grew stronger and the whole peninsula was in a turmoil during Abū Bakr's (ﷺ) reign. The Muslims were surrounded by a storm of blind apostasy and they began fighting it once more. However, they were unable to defeat it until after they sustained losses greater than those they had experienced in the Prophet's (ﷺ) lifetime while fighting those idolaters. The people who remained steadfast to the truth after the death of their Prophet were the real Muslims. Islām is a commitment to principles, not people. Allāh (ﷻ) taught His Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims through him, how to adhere to the truth they had recognized and to hold fast to it no matter how much they were attacked and opposed.

❑ The world is overflowing with incentives to deviation, and it attempts first and foremost not to leave any space in itself for faith. If faith gains any progress after struggling hard, it will try to make it forgo a portion and be content with a portion. If it succeeds in manoeuvring faith into this position, it will then be easy to finish it off. This is why Allāh (ﷻ) gives the decisive order in the Qur'ān, decreeing that faith is an integrated whole which cannot be divided and that this fact must never cease to be impressed upon the unbelievers. Thus we must hold fast to these interrelated teachings, love and hate according to their directives and make peace or war on their behalf. The value of emotion in the service of Islām is no less than the value of reason relevant. The relevant Qur'ānic *Āyāt* (verses) are actually command to the Muslims which came in the form of an address to the Prophet (ﷺ).

﴾O Prophet! Remember your duty to Allāh and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Behold! Allāh is knower, Wise. And follow that which is inspired in you from your Lord. Behold Allāh is Aware of what you do. And put your trust in Allāh, for Allāh is sufficient as Trustee.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 1-3)

It is not expected that the Prophet (ﷺ) would obey the non-believes and hypocrites for him to be warned of it. It is we who are meant by this directive. Similarly we find the verse:

﴾"Call [the mankind] to your *Rabb,* and do not be of those who ascribe partners [to Him]. And do not call any other god along with Allāh"﴿ (Qur'ān 28: 87-88)

From the very start of his *da'wah* the Prophet (ﷺ) waged war on polytheism and false gods, and it is from him that the people learned of this battle, thus it is not possible to expect otherwise from him.

❑ Similarly the Qur'ān says:

﴾Do not strain your eyes towards that which We cause some wedded pairs among them to enjoy, and do not be grieved on their account, and lower your wing [in tenderness] for the believers.﴿ (Qur'ān 15: 88)

﴾And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of our remembrance, who follows his own lust and whose case has been abandoned Say: [it is] the Truth from the *Rabb* of you [All].﴿
(Qur'ān 18: 28-29)

﴾And if you [O Muhammad] are in doubt concerning that which We reveal you, then question those who read the Scripture [that was] before you. Indeed, the truth from your Lord has come to you. So, do not be one of the waverers. And do not be one of those who deny the Revelations of Allāh, for then you will be one of the losers.﴿ (Qur'ān 10: 94-95)

The commentators say that the *Ummah* was addressed by these *Āyāt* (verses) in the person of its Prophet (ﷺ), just as orders are given to the leader though he is the soldier who execute them.

Others say that the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was addressed by them in order to spur him on and make him more determined. It is like the strong person who is told not to weaken, or the intelligent person who is told not to be stupid, not because it is feared that they will be so but to encourage them to maintain these qualities of strength and wisdom. In a similar manner courageous people will go forward into the jaws of death if they are told not to be cowardly.

❑ In any case the Prophet (ﷺ) is the most excellent example and from his pattern of behaviour the people take his ideal. Both he as well as ourselves have been ordered to steer clear of the misguided people and not to adopt their attitudes and actions, the reason for this being is that on many occasions truth is in a weak position and hard to follow whereas falsehood is strong and has many attractions. An ideology has the right to demand of its adherents their total support and their rejection of anything opposed to it. The orders which command these attitudes will never be short of sternness: what more could there be after Allāh (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ):

﴾**If you ascribe a partner of Allāh your work will fail and indeed you will be among the losers. No, it is Allāh you must serve, and be among the thankful.**﴿ (Qur'ān 39: 65-66)

This mode of address resounds in the ears and it is used for a purpose. It had the effect of rousing the feelings of the Muslims against corruption and frightening them against allowing it to happen, lest they fall into it.

❑ The opinions of the commentators which previously quoted are also equally applicable to this *Āyāh* (verse):

﴾**And if you [Muhammad] are in doubt concerning that which We reveal to you, then question those who read the Scripture [that was] before you.**﴿ (Qur'ān 10: 94)

This is addressed to the reader or the listener or to the Prophet (ﷺ) himself by way of exhortation as you already know, since the Prophet would never doubt his prophethood.

This statement supposes the impossible to happen, for in another chapter, the Qur'ān says:

﴾**Say [O Muhammad]: The Beneficent One has no son. I am first among the worshippers.**﴿ (Qur'ān 43: 81)

that is, if He had a son, I should be the first to worship him.

❑ So what is the meaning of asking the People of the Book? The commentators say, it means the trustworthy and just among them, for they would not hide the evidence of truth if they were asked. However, think that such truthful people among the People of the Book are very scarce and one cannot depend on what they say. I do not think this is the meaning of the verse. One comes to appreciate the value of what one has, when one sees the confusion among others. So if you ever have any doubt about the Qur'ān being from Allāh (ﷻ), then search through the Old and New Testaments and you will quickly return to your Book and hold fast to it, and praise the Almighty a thousand times for having guided you to it! I think this is what the verse is referring to, since the truth in Islām becomes stronger and clearer when one discovers the corruption that happened to the earlier religions. This understanding agrees with Allāh's saying:

﴾**And if you do follow their desires after the knowledge which has come to you, then you will have from Allah no protecting friend nor helper.**﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 120)

❑ It is also supported by the saying which Bukhārī reports from Ibn 'Abbās. He said:

"O gathering of Muslims, how could you ask the People of the Book while your Book which was revealed to your Prophet is the most recent book from Allah (ﷻ)? You recite it in its pure form without any corruption, and Allah (ﷻ) tells you that the People of the Book changed and interpolated the Book of Allah (ﷻ). They wrote the Book with their own hands and said it was from Allah (ﷻ) so that they might sell it for a little price! Does not the

knowledge which came to you prevent you from asking them? No, by Allāh (ﷻ), we do not see a single one of them ever asking you about what was revealed to them!"

❑ Islām from the educational point of view is knowledge of the truth, and from the emotional point of view love for and support of it and hatred and open enmity towards falsehood. There are some people who show calmness in their feelings and with this they receive an opinion and its opposite. This may be acceptable in trifling matters. However, if it concerns faith and disbelief, morality and immorality, then it is not. It is Allāh (ﷻ) who taught His Prophet (ﷺ) the Book and faith, and from this recognition of Allāh's bounty to him he held his faith dear and felt proud of the Qur'ān. He lived with them, and for them he waged war and made peace. Many a time did his enemies long for him to compromise a little with them, but they were disappointed.

﴾Who would have had you compromise, that they may compromise.﴿ (Qur'ān 68: 9)

❑ The nation who is worthy of belonging to his fold is that nation which struggles for truth and does not allow it to be disparaged or wronged. One of its characteristics is that, it is a nation with an ideology and a methodology: its moral and material existence depend on the energy it expends for this purpose and the fruits it produces.

Status of the Sunnah in Relation to the Qur'ān

It is the duty of Muslim to arrange in order, the sources from which they take their faith and to know the correct position of the recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet (ﷺ) in relation to the complete record of divine Revelation with which the final message was crowned. The Qur'ān is the spirit and essence of Islām, and its conclusive verses its constitution was laid down and its method explained. Allāh (ﷻ) himself undertook to protect it and in this way the reality of the faith was preserved

and everlasting life was decreed for it. The man to whom Allāh (ﷻ) chose to convey His signs and deliver His message was a "living Qur'ān" who walked among men. He was a perfect example of faith and humility, striving and struggle, truth and strength, understanding and expression. It is no wonder, therefore, that his sayings, actions, tacit agreements, morals and rules as well as all aspects of his life are counted as the pillars of faith and legislation for Muslims.

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) chose him to speak in His name and convey His message: so who is more capable than he of understanding the meaning of Allāh's words? And who is more capable than he of defining the method which conforms to the Qur'ānic references and suggestions? The application of the law is no less important than its formulation. The law has its letter and its spirit, and when efforts are made to interpret different events according to the law, one finds juristic opinions and advice being given and experiences and lessons being recalled, sometimes the application of the law in these various circumstances seems to be nearer to the letter, and at other times it seems nearer to the spirit.

❑ The Qur'ān is the law of Islām and the Sunnah its application, and Muslims are required to respect this application just as much as they are required to respect the law itself. Allāh (ﷻ) Himself gave His Prophet (ﷺ) the right to be followed in all that he ordered or prohibited, since in these things he did not speak of his own accord but under guidance from his Lord. Thus obedience to him is obedience to Allāh (ﷻ) and it is not blind submission to a human being. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those who obey the Messenger obey Allāh, and those who turn away, We have not sent you as a warden over them.﴾ (Qur'ān 4: 80)

﴿And We have revealed you the Remembrance so that you may explain to people that which has been revealed for them, and that perhaps they may reflect.﴾ (Qur'ān 16: 44)

﴾And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it. And what-so-ever he forbids, abstain [from it].﴿ (Qur'ān 59: 7)

❑ It must be remembered, however, that divine inspiration does not paralyse the higher human faculties. It is a mistake to think that the prophets are puppets whom the angels cause to talk or keep quiet. Even if they were not prophets, they would have been respectable men qualified to be in the forefront. Revelation does not come to people haphazardly. Only those are selected for it, who are the most perfect of all people in their intellect, virtue and character. Their way of life is not to be discarded nor are they to be neglected, above all when all these qualities are reinforced by infallibility and the sagacity by correct direction.

❑ To follow the footsteps of the Prophets (ﷺ) is total virtue and, as such, the Sunnah of Muhammad (ﷺ) was made a primary source of law along with the Qur'ān by which Allāh (ﷻ) honoured him and all the Muslims. The things that are reported from him must be adopted, however, be scrutinized carefully before they are accepted as genuine, because of the distortions which occurred in the past. Not everything which is authentically proved to come from him is always understood correctly or given its rightful position. The Muslims were not hurt by the fabricated ḥādīths as much as by the misinterpretation of genuine ḥādīths. This reached such a great extent that finally people began to look at the entire collection of ḥādīths with a sceptical eye and wished that the Muslim would eradicate them.

❑ This is an error on two counts. Firstly, it ignores historical reality, since the world has never known any man whose every action was recorded and minutely scrutinized as those of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullāh. How could they then be thrown into the dustbin? Secondly, there are many gems of wisdom in the Sunnah, and if they were to be ascribed to anybody else, that person would be considered one of the greatest reformers, so why allow them to go waste and deprive people of their benefit?

❑ When we study the legacy of Muhammad (ﷺ) in morals and when we review his sayings which run into the thousands on virtue, we have the impression that if an army of psychologists and educationists were to come together and try to produce such advice, they would fail. Yet morality is only one branch of the Prophet's (ﷺ) message. Nevertheless, no-one can be an authority on the Sunnah unless he or she fulfils all the requirements necessary to make the study of it beneficial to Islām and the Muslims.

(1) No-one can be an authority on the Sunnah unless he or she studies the Qur'ānic sciences in detail. The Qur'ān is the sole constitution of Islām, and it is what defines precisely for Muslims their duties and rights, it delegates to them all their responsibilities in order, and it demarcates their acts of devotion, their lives, so that one act does not cross out another or cause them to neglect their work and duties in life. Those who fail to acquire this knowledge from the Qur'ān will never be compensated for its loss by anything else, and any picture which forms in their minds about Islām from a non-Qurānic source is defective and may be totally contrary to the truth. For this reason the leading *Ṣaḥabah* were keen to clear the way for the noble Qur'ān to occupy its rightful place in their hearts and they ensured that nothing vied with it for priority.

❑ Ibn 'Abdul Barr reported in his book *Jāmi' Bayān al'Ilm wa Fadlih* from Jābir Ibn[3] 'Abdullāh ibn Yasār who said he heard 'Alī (ﷺ) saying:

I strongly urge all those who have written collections (other than Qur'ān) to go back and destroy them, for the people perished only because they followed sayings of their scholars and cast aside the Book of their Lord.

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[3]This is how it is written in the book "*Jamī Bayān al 'Ilm..*" It is a mistake either from the copier or the printer. Originally it should be "from 'Abdullāh ibn Yasār". This Jabir is Al Ja'fi and he is very weak. Al Jauzajani and others called him a liar.

❑ He also reported from Al Zuhrī from 'Urwa[4] that 'Umar ibn al Khattāb (ﷺ) wanted to write down the Prophetic (ﷺ) sayings and consulted the Companions about it. They agreed, and 'Umar (ﷺ) prayed for one month, asking Allāh's guidance in the matter. One day he came, confident of Allāh's decision, and said:

I had wanted to write down the prophetic sayings but I remembered a people before you, who wrote books and held fast to them and forgot the Book of Allāh (ﷻ). By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall not mix the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) with anything at all. [or in another version] shall not cause the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) to be forgotten.

❑ Also, on the authority of Ibn Sirin who said: "The children of Israel went astray because of some books they inherited from their fathers.

❑ 'Alqama and Al-Aswad visited 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and they had a scroll containing on interesting text. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd then told his servant to bring a bowl of water and with it he washed out the writing, repeating,

﴾We relate unto you [Muhammad] the best of stories through Our Revelations unto you, of this Qur'ān. And before this [i.e. before the coming of Divine Revelation to you], you were among those who knew nothing about it [the Qur'ān].﴿ (Qur'ān 12: 3)

❑ They said to him, "Look, it contains wonderful sayings."

❑ But he continued to wash it out and said: "These hearts are vessels, so fill them with the Qur'ān and do not fill them with anything else." The scroll had contained a portion of the sciences of the People of the Book.

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[4] He is 'Urwa son of Al Zubayr. He never heard from 'Umar (ﷺ) and in fact, never saw him. This quotation is therefore weak. It is reported in the same manner by Al-Khatīb with the exception of the version of Rāshid who reported it from Al Zuhri and connected it by mentioning 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ibn 'Urwa and 'Umar (ﷺ). However, this report is rare, as Al-Khatīb himself explained.

❑ Also, on the authority of Āmir al Sha'bī from Quraza ibn Ka'b (ﷺ), who said:

We left the town, heading for Iraq and 'Umar (ﷺ) went with us as far as, Sirar, then he said: "Do you know why I have walked with you?"

❑ They said: "Yes. We are the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions so you have walked with us in order to see us off and honour us."

❑ Then he said, "You are going to the people of a town who recite the Qur'ān with a humming sound like that of the bee. Do not distract them with the Ḥadīth. Recite the Qur'ān to the best of your ability and keep to the minimum your quotations from the Prophet (ﷺ), peace be upon him. Continue and I shall be your partner."

❑ When Quraza reached Iraq, the people asked him to narrate the Prophet's (ﷺ) sayings and he said, "Umar (ﷺ) stopped us from doing that."

❑ 'Umar (ﷺ), 'Alī (ﷺ) and the other leading Companions did not reject the Sunnah. Nevertheless, they wanted to give the Qur'ān the greatest share of reception and appreciation, and this is the natural sequence. One must fully and correctly understand the law before delving into the details and explanations which are given for some parts of it, since the details and explanations are not needed by everyone. Also people's minds might be clustered up and no space left in them for the necessary and important principles.

❑ Care must be taken especially since the way in which the Ḥadīth are narrated brings together various sayings which the Prophet (ﷺ) made on different occasions and at different times. 'Urwa ibn al Zubayr reports that 'Ā'ishah said:

(1) Are you not surprised at Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ)? He came and sat next to my room and narrated Ḥadīth from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), wanting me to hear. I was praying and he left before I

finished my prayer. If I had caught him I should have replied to him. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not recite Ḥadīth as you do.[5]

(2) After the understanding of the Qur'ān comes the correct understanding of the authentic ḥādīths. It is best for those who know the Sunnah to refrain from quoting the Prophet (ﷺ) if they do not understand the full implication of the quotation, though they may understand the literal sense of the words. The Sunnah suffered greatly in the past from those who memorized much of it but understood very little. 'Ā'ishah's astonishment at Abū Ḥurairah's (ؓ) quoting of ḥādīths was not because she was accusing him of lying. His method of narrating Ḥadīth neglected the circumstances under which they had been said and strung one Ḥadīth to another. Muslim narrates that 'Umar (ؓ) struck Abū Ḥurairah (ؓ) because he heard him quoting the Ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ): "who-ever says 'there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ) will enter paradise." Perhaps 'Umar (ؓ) did so because he found Abū Ḥurairah (ؓ) mentioning the Ḥadīth to those who understood nothing about it except that Islām is a spoken statement and there is no action behind it.[6] Stopping the Ḥadīth, even if it be authentic, is better than reporting it in this manner, surrounded by ignorance.[7]

❑ Ibn 'Abdul Barr reports that Abū Ḥurairah (ؓ) himself said: "I am narrating to you Ḥadīth which if I had done so during 'Umar's (ؓ) time, he would have struck me with a cane." 'Umar's (ؓ) reason for preventing the narration of Ḥadīth was because he wanted to build society on the teachings of the Qur'ān, and encourage people to study the Qur'ān and extract what they needed from it. If the Sunnah were narrated after this had been accomplished, it would be absorbed by enlightened minds and

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[5] Narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Abdul Barr.

[6] This explanation is improbable even impossible, since the Ḥadīth itself as narrated by Muslim says that 'Umar (ؓ) was the first to meet Abū Ḥuraira (ؓ) and hear it from him. May be the author should look at it again.

[7] What I say is correct. Sheikh Nāṣiruddin has no reasonable objection to my explanation. (Author).

would not be misinterpreted. Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ) might have been able to quote a hundred ḥādīths on *ṣalāh* because of his good memory, and perhaps 'Umar (ﷺ) would have no objection to them being taught in a specialist school. However, disliked the Muslim masses to be occupied with such things when a few ḥādīths were sufficient for them, and then they could devote more time to what would be beneficial for Islām and all its people. This is the reason why he objected to those who narrated too many ḥādīths. Ibn Ḥazm reported almost a thousand pages of Ḥadīth on *wuḍu*, for those who were interested in this kind of knowledge, although to occupy the masses of Muslims with the like would be sheer stupidity! What time would be left for the Qur'ān itself? In fact, to occupy the Muslims with the Qur'ān in this manner is to trespass on the religion.

❑ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

"Recite the Qur'ān and do not exaggerate in it nor shun it, and do not eat by it."[8]

If any credit should go to the memorizers, it is because they conveyed the knowledge to those who could benefit from it. In a similar vein the Prophet said:

"Perhaps the carrier of knowledge is not knowledgeable. Perhaps one carries knowledge to a person who is more knowledgeable than one self."[9]

❑ Abū Yūsuf said:

Al A'mash asked me about a problem. The two of us were alone and I answered him. He said:

"Where did you get this from, Ya'qub?" I said: "From the Ḥadīth which you told me and I told others!"

Then he said to me: "O Ya'qub, I learnt this Ḥadīth before your parents were married and I never knew its meaning until now."

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[8] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Ṭaḥāwi in Sharḥ Ma'anī al Āthār from Abdul Rahmān ibn Shibl.

[9] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn 'Abdul Barr as well as other compilers.

Abū Yūsuf, the scholar, might have seen what Al A'mash, the memorizer, did not. It is not forbidden to memorize without understanding. What is forbidden is that, one should understand incorrectly.

❑ The technical arrangement of the ḥādīths as they were recorded and came down to us, places all matters of faith in one chapter and all matters of law in another, and so on. Now, since Islām is a collection of all these truths, the Sunnah has come to resemble a huge clothing store in which different garments are arranged in different corners. Here you will find the headwear, across there the trousers, and beyond that the shirts, etc. Naturally, those who want a complete outfit will go to every corner and select what suits them. It often happens, however, that you see someone buying two caps and leaving barefoot, and another buying a handkerchief but is without a proper shirt! This is what happened to many groups who studied the Sunnah.

After much speculation, they came out to the people armed with a toothbrush and turban without a tail. This for them is Islām. The secret is that they entered this large showroom and came out thinking that the whole of the religion was contained in one or two Ḥadīth. Thus they harmed the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

(3)Lack of understanding of the Sunnah, in spite of the preoccupation with it, has harmed the orientation of the Muslims and spread among them a set of unsuitable laws and restrictive traditions. These are rejected by the spirit of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, although they may be based on an authentic Ḥadīth not properly understood.

❑ The cause of this is that Islām has presented a set of laws on all important matters, and they are contained in the Qur'ān and Sunnah; they are all complementary, verified and supported by one another. Thus if there appears to be something which contradicts all the others, it is investigated until a rational explanation is found for it which conforms to all the others, or it is rejected in favour of those which are more authenticated. Many of the scholars think that the Ḥadīth narrated by one authentic

individual (and these ḥādīths are known technically as *aḥād*) must be rejected if they contradict the evident meaning of the Qur'ānic verses or other authentic sources or if they contradict the reasoning of *qiyas* (analogy) based on the Qur'ān itself. They differentiate between the ḥādīths narrated by the jurists and those narrated by people who are memorizers only. Let me give you an example of how nations may be exposed to stagnation and loss as a result of their misunderstanding of events.

❑ Many Muslims rule that women should not see any stranger or be seen by any stranger, and in Madīnah the women walked in the streets wearing loose garments covering them from head to toe. There are two slits for them to see through, although these may be covered by pieces of glass or celluloid. This widespread tradition is based on a Ḥadīth which I heard the *Imām* of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Mosque quoting in the pulpit during a Friday prayer. The Ḥadīth states that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) objected to his wives seeing 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm and when they pointed out that he was blind, he asked them, "Are you blind?[10]

❑ I objected to the preacher's citing of this Ḥadīth, since the scholar of the Sunnah had spoken about its meaning. It is sheer

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[10]Narrated by Abū Dāwūd Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Sa'd and Al Baihaqi through Al-Zuhri. The last said: "Nabhan, slave of Umm Salmah, reported from Umm Salāmah that she said:

"I was with the Prophet (ﷺ) and so was Maimūna and Ibn Umm Maktūm approached. This was after *hijab* was instituted. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Veil yourselves from him.

So we said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), isn't he blind and cannot see or recognize us?

He replied: "Are you blind? Aren't you seeing him?

Al-Tirmidhī said it is a good and sound Ḥadīth, and Ibn Hajar declared its chain of narrators to be strong in his *Fatḥ al Bari*. This is doubtful, however, since Nabhan is accepted as authentic only by Ibn Ḥibbān who is known for his negligence in authenticating the narrators. This fact is pointed out by Ibn Ḥajar himself in his introduction to *Lisan al-Mizan*. For this reason we see that he did not authenticate Nabhan in Al Taqrib but said of him: "Acceptable when scrutinized. But no scrutiny was done of him as regards this Ḥadīth. This statement can only mean that this Ḥadīth is unacceptable. Ibn 'Abdul Barr says: "He is not of those whose ḥādīths are authentic and this Ḥadīth of his is unknown", as quoted by Ibn al Turkmani in *Al Jawhar Al Naqi*.

ignorance of the Sunnah to cite it when speaking of the duties of women, their way of life and the principles of their participation in society in general. Why do we not mention the Ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī in this connection since they are more precise and authentic?

❑ Under the heading "Women at War and their Fighting with the Men" Bukhārī narrates that Anas (ﷺ) said:

"When it was the day of Uhud the people (Muslims) retreated from around the people. And I saw 'Ā'ishah, daughter of Abū Bakr (ﷺ), and Umm Sulaym: their garments were tucked in and I could see the outline of their legs. They were carrying waterbags on their backs, pouring the water into the mouths of the people and returning to fill them and repeat the same procedure."

He also mentioned under the heading "Women at War at Sea" that Anas (ﷺ) said:
"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) entered the house of Milhan's daughter. He lay down and slept. Then he laughed.
She asked: "Why did you laugh, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?
He said: 'I saw people from my *Ummah* sailing across blue sea in the path of Allāh (ﷻ) as if they were kings seated on thrones.
She said: O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), pray to Allāh (ﷻ) to make me one of them.
He said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), make her one of them."
Then he slept again, and he laughed. She asked him the reason and he repeated his dream as before.
She said: "Pray to Allāh (ﷻ) to make me one of them."
He said:" You are among the first, not among the last."

❑ She married 'Ubādah Ibn al Ṣamit after that, and she sailed across sea with Bint Quraza. When they reached shore she mounted her horse. It stumbled and she fell off and died.

❑ He also mentioned under the heading of "Women's Carrying of Waterbags to the People in Battle" that 'Umar ibn Al Khaṭṭāb

(ﷺ) distributed scarves to the women of Madīnah and one excellent scarf remained.

Some of those with him said: "O Commander of the faithful, give this one to the grand daughter of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), who is with you. They meant Umm Kulthum, daughter of 'Alī (ﷺ).

'Umar (ﷺ) Said: "Umm Salit is more deserving of it. She was one of the Anṣār women who took the pledge with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)."

'Umar (ﷺ) continued: "She used to sew water bags for us on the day of Uhud."

He also mentioned under the heading of "Women's Attendance to the Wounded in Battle" from Al Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwadh. She said: "We were with the Prophet, giving water to drink, attending the sick and removing the wounded to Madīna," etc.

❑ Let us suppose that Bukhārī did not narrate these authentic ḥādīths: should the Ḥadīth of the blind man be imposed upon society? Should women be confined to their homes and never able to leave this prison? Such a ruling cannot be seen in the Qur'ān. In fact, the Qur'ān makes this ruling the punishment for women who commit fornication!

﴾As for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you against them. And if they testify [to the truth of the allegation] then confine them to the houses until death take them or [until] Allāh appoint for them a way [through new legislation].﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 15)

❑ However, the Muslims, when they found the civilized ways of educating men and women too hard because of their deviation from the Qur'ān resorted to prisons and castles, and what happened is well known. The Muslims abandoned the Qur'ān for the ḥādīths. Then they abandoned the ḥādīths for the sayings of the scholars. Then they abandoned the sayings of the scholars for the method of the blind followers. Then they abandoned these blind followers and their sternness for the ignorant people

and their confusion. The evolution of Islāmic thought in this manner was a disaster for Islām and the Muslims. Ibn 'Abdul Barr reports from Al-Ḍahhāk ibn Muzāhim:

"There will come a time over people when the Qur'ān will be left on the shelf and spiders will build their webs over it: no use will be made of what is in it and men's actions will be according to narrations and ḥādīths."

❑ The path of rectitude in this blind alley is to return to the Qur'ān and make it the main pillar of our intellectual and spiritual lives. Then when we are fully conversant with it we should look into the Sunnah and benefit from the Prophet's (ﷺ) wisdom, way of life, worship, character and regulations. Nobody should be allowed to speak on the Sunnah who has little understanding of the Qur'ān, or little understanding of the variety of narrations, or is unaware of the occasions and circumstances under which they were said.

The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Miracles

The life of the Prophet (ﷺ), both public as well as private, went according to the customary laws of nature and, as a whole, did not go beyond them. As a human being, he felt hunger and satisfaction, he had his periods of health and sickness, he became tired, he rested, he felt sad and glad. However, humans in these things are of various categories and they are not all bound by a general law. There are those who are passionate about their necessities, and if they diminish just a little their hearts palpitate and their energies are drained. And there are others who are sturdy and content with their small share. They march towards their goal with high head and firm footsteps. The machines which run on oil are of different categories. There is the bad kind which consumes much fuel and gives little benefit, and there is the good kind which produces much with a small fuel consumption. Human beings are just like that with their bodies, necessities and luxuries.

❑ Anyone who pursues the *Sīrah* of Muhammad (ﷺ) Ibn 'Abdullāh will see from his private life the sturdiness of the material which moulded his body in such a manner that giants could not compete with him. He was able to bear the burdens of life and the difficulties of the struggle with complete bravery and rectitude. Yes there are geniuses who are blind or deaf, who have stomachache or pains in their chest, but genius is not prophethood.[11] Allāh's perfect favour to anybody is that He (ﷻ) should grant him freedom from all these diseases so that all the elements may be complete which would rectify his vision of life and his behaviour in it. From this point of view Muhammad (ﷺ) was a perfect human being and his life was in total accordance with Allāh's universal laws concerning outstanding heroes.

❑ As for his public life, as a Messenger (ﷺ) conveying the Message from Allāh (ﷻ), training the believers, resisting the unbelievers and persisting in the spread of his *da'wah* until it bore fruit in all corners of the globe.

❑ There is no doubt that, the Qur'ān is a miraculous book, it awakens the higher faculties in the human race. It is somewhat similar to the great events which happen to people and cause them to think deeply and with insight. It is therefore a human book which assists the general awareness to be more mature and accurate.

﴾Behold! We have appointed it a lecture [Qur'ān] in Arabic that perhaps you might understand.﴿ (Qur'ān 43: 3)

A Scripture whereof the *Āyāt* (verses) are expounded, a lecture (Qur'ān) in Arabic for people who have knowledge.

﴾Good tidings and a warning.﴿ (Qur'ān 41: 4)

❑ The difference between the education of the Arabs by the Qur'ān and the education of the Jews by the Torah is like the difference between the voice of guidance which shows the intelligent person the way and the whip of punishment which

[11] See my book The Ideology of the Muslim.

stings the back of the stupid beast to make it move forward, but it takes one step forward and then jibs. 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāha used to chant:

"Among us is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) reciting His (ﷻ) Book.

When a hidden ray of sunlight splits the dawn. He showed us guidance after blindness.

So our hearts have faith in him, that what he says is true. At night he forsakes his bed.

When beds make the idolaters heavy with sleep."

❑ Some scholars say that the Qur'ān is the only miracle of the Prophet. Here they are looking only at the literal sense of the word miracle (Arabic *mu'jiza*), which is a supernatural occurrence combined with a challenge, and such a challenge was offered only by the Qur'ān. I have accepted a similar meaning[12], not because of the literal definition of miracle, but in consideration of the intrinsic value of other miracles in relation to the noble goals Islām brought by.

❑ There is, however, no relationship between belief or action and these studies: wicked people will not be forgiven their wickedness because of their belief that the Prophet was sheltered by a cloud or addressed by a rock, nor will righteous people lose their status if they deny such miracles. Such studies go back to the scientific assessment of the evidence for and against such occurences and the evaluation of their significance. Accuracy or inaccuracy in this matter will not take away from one's faith.

❑ A terrible craze took over the Muslims in the ascribing of miracles to righteous people. The majority of them went to the extent of linking miracles to the level of faith, and one writer on *tawhīd* even said in verse: "Affirm the ability of saints to perform miracles, And who denies it, reject whatever he says." The relationship of this to *tawhīd* is like its relationship to grammar or astronomy! In other words the essence of the religion is far removed from these studies whether they conclude

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[12] See my book The Ideology of the Muslim.

in the affirmative or negative. The miracles which are attributed to the saints by their admirers are evil expressions of the vices of laziness and stupidity which are hidden within them, just as the nightmares of a sleeper are the expressions of their disturbed minds and frayed nerves. This saint opened a locked door without key; that saint flew in the air without wings; that other one urinated on a rock and it turned into gold; and that other one had knowledge of the unseen!

❑ There is much nonsense of this sort, reflecting ignorance of the real nature of the religion (Islām) and of the world. It also shows that its promoters are too deviant in their minds and hearts to understand fully the lives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. Muhammad (ﷺ) was not a man of fanciful imagination who built his life and mission on fictitious tales. He was a man of reality who perceived from near and afar, and if he wanted anything he would take the necessary steps to achieve it. In taking these steps, as can be seen in the light of bitter reality, he took the utmost precautions and expended his utmost energies. Neither he nor his Companions ever thought that heaven would strive for him if he relaxed, act for him if he was lazy, or look after him if he was negligent. Never were miracles or supernatural occurrences the foundations or girders in the building of a great man or a great nation.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions learnt and taught, fought and made peace, defeated and were defeated. They spread their call throughout the horizons and they struggled on a handful of earth. No earthly law was ever broken for them and no universal law was ever bent for them. In fact, they sweated more than their enemies did and bore heavy losses in the path of their Lord, and thus in the struggle for survival they had the priority of steadfastness and victory. Allāh (ﷻ) taught them harsh lessons so that they might not expect any favouritism from Providence in any clash, although they were too sharp-witted to expect such favouritism. Allāh (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ):

﴾And when you [Muhammad] are among them and arrange [their] worship for them, let only a party of them stand with you [to worship] and let them take their arms. Then when they have performed their prostration, let them fall to the rear, and let another party come that has not worshipped, and let them worship with you, and let them take precautions and their arms. Those who disbelieve long for you to neglect your arms and your baggage that they may attack you once for all. It is no sin for you to lay aside your arms if rain impedes you or you are sick. But take precautions. Behold! Allāh prepares for the disbelievers a shameful punishment.﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 102)

Look how they are ordered, while standing in prayer before Allāh (ﷻ) to be extremely cautious and attentive. Allāh (ﷻ) did not allow any hope to them into thinking that the angels would descend and assist them. If they did not protect themselves, then no-one would protect them. That is what Allāh (ﷻ) said to Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions.

❑ When the Muslims failed to heed this lesson in the Battle of Uhud, they were dealt a painful blow, which felled seventy of their heroes and made them taste bitter defeat. On that day the leader of the unbelievers, Abū Sufyān, stood up and shouted "Long live Hubal!" (Their chief god). The Prophet (ﷺ) was severely tested in his ability to save the situation: he fought and killed and was wounded.

❑ Abū Ḥurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrates that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said on the day of Uhud:

"May Allāh's anger be severe on the people who do this to their Prophet. [Pointing to his teeth]. "May Allāh's anger be severe on a man who is killed by Allāh's Messenger in the path of Allāh (ﷻ)."[13]

Anas (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet's (ﷺ) front teeth were broken on the day of Uhud and his head was gashed. He began wiping away the blood from his face, saying: "How could a people be successful who gashed their Prophet's (ﷺ) head and

[13] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

broke his teeth while he was calling them to Allāh (ﷻ)? " Upon this Allāh (ﷻ) revealed:

﴾**It is no concern at all of yours [Muhammad] whether He relents toward them or punish them; for they are evildoers.**﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 128)[14]

Do you think that negligence of the steps toward victory brought anything other than defeat? Even though those who were defeated were representatives of true *tawhīd*? Even though those who gained victory were upholders of pure paganism?

❑ Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to attack, he feigned otherwise, saying: 'War is Deception'.[15] In spite of his taking precautions according to Allāh's order, and his respect for the natural laws which regulate human life, some of the Arab tribes were able to trick him. They persuaded him to send a group of *Qurrā'* of the Holy Qur'ān who were some of the choicest *Ṣaḥabah*, and they killed them all to the last man at Bi'r Ma'una. Only the birds discovered their place of death and hovered in the air above the bodies of these martyrs. These men who fell victims to treachery were some of the best-loved of Allāh's creation to Him, yet He did not give permission to any of them to fly without wings or escape his inevitable fate, is to be thought by the backward Muslims of today.

❑ If precaution and care were the Prophet's (ﷺ) practice, then even more so were preparation and exhaustion of energy. How do you think Muhammad (ﷺ) gained victory over the mankind? He brought his men to maturity with faith just as the summer ripens its sweetest fruits with its slow heat. Thus when he dispatched them to all corners of the earth, they went with a roar like that of a violent storm. Islām from the day it started was a battle led by Revelation, thus its first flowing impressions were like a storm with lightning and thunder:

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[14] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim in the same chapter.

[15] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd from Ka'b ibn Mālik (ؓ). Bukhārī and Muslim narrated something similar.

﴾Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein in darkness, thunder and the flash of lightning. They thrust their fingers in their ears by reason of the thunderclaps, for fear of death. Allāh encompasses the disbelievers [in His guidance].﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 19)

Do you think that relaxation and negligence would have left any opening in these crowded ranks? Shame on the Muslims of today for expecting miracles in a world which has bared its fangs to annihilate them from the roots.

❑ I do not deny that miracles happen to people. However, they happen to the believer and the unbeliever, the righteous person as well as the sinner. If a man walks on water without his feet getting wet, this does not prove he is righteous since righteousness can be determined only by one's faith and action as Allāh (ﷻ) prescribed. Stories that certain people performed miracles is a purely historical matter for whoever feels so inclined, and it has nothing to do with faith or responsibilities. This is, of course, not speaking of the miracles of the prophets, which emphasized the truth of what they conveyed from Allāh (ﷻ). Nevertheless, even those miracles which came with prophethood are a thing of the past and there is no benefit in arguing over them. We also learn that the miracle of Muhammad (ﷺ) was not like those which preceded his era. It was a human, rational and perpetual miracle, around which Allāh (ﷻ) organized his life and mission according to the law of cause and effect, as you have seen.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) did not know the unseen. He was like any other human being not knowing what he would earn the next day. Nothing of the sort should be expected of him after the clear command of Allāh (ﷻ) came to him:

﴾Say: "For myself I have no power to benefit, nor power to hurt, save that which Allāh will so. Had I knowledge of the unseen, I should have abundance of wealth, and adversity would not touch me. I am but a warner, and a bearer of good tidings to folk who believe.﴿ (Qur'ān 7: 188)

He might be approached by someone who intended evil but expressed love, and he knew nothing of that until the man was exposed by his actions:

﴾And among the town people of Al Madīnah [there are some who] persist in hypocrisy whom you [O Muhammad] do not know. We know them.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 101)

On the Day of Judgement he will be confronted by men whom he left thinking that they were staunch believers but were later exposed as to their black hearts and evil intentions. He will then say, as Jesus said:[16]

﴾I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when you took me up you were the Watcher over them.﴿ (Qur'ān 5: 120)

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) might have given him knowledge of some unseen things for specific reasons, like the prophesy in the Qur'ān of the Romans defeating the Persians, after the victory that the latter had gained over them. This gladdened the pagans and saddened the Muslims for they supported the People of the Book.

❑ There are many authentic ḥādīths which apparently suggest that the Prophet (ﷺ) was aware of the future. For example, there is the Ḥadīth of 'Adī ibn Ḥātim, in which he said:

"While I was with the Prophet (ﷺ) there came to him a man complaining of famine. Then came another complaining of highway robbers. Upon this he said: "Adī, have you seen Ḥirah?"

❑ I said: "No. But I have been told of it."

❑ He said: "If your life is prolonged, you will see women on camels travelling from Ḥirah to the Ka'bah, not fearing anyone but Allāh (ﷻ)."

❑ I said to myself: "So where will be the homes of (the tribe of) Tayy who have become high ranking in the land?"

❑ He said: "And if your life is prolonged, you will see the treasures of Khosrau being opened up."

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[16] The meaning of this is in a Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās as narrated by Bukhārī in the chapter on *Tafsīr*.

❑ I said to myself: "Khosrau son of Hurmuz?

❑ He said: "Khosrau son of Hurmuz. And I saw the women on camels travelling Ḥirah and circumambulating the Ka'bah fearing none but Allāh (ﷻ), and I was among those who conquered the treasures of Chosroes."[17]

In truth these ḥādīths and others like them were not information of the unseen.[18] They were a testament to the truth of Allāh's promise that the future belonged to Islām and that this religion would become supreme in all corners of the globe. They were thus an explanation by the Prophet of Allāh's (ﷻ) words:

﴿He it is who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions. And Allāh suffices as a witness.﴾ (Qur'ān 48: 28)

﴿Allāh has promised those of you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed [the present rulers] in the earth, even as He caused those who were before them to succeed [others]; and that he will surely establish for them their religion which He approved for them and will give them in exchange safety after their fear.﴾ (Qur'ān 24: 55)

❑ Similar to that are the ḥādīths which warn of persecution. A person who knows the market forces will not hesitate, after a brief examination of the prevailing conditions, to issue a correct judgement of them. Someone who intimately understands psychology will, after a quick glance, fathom what lies beneath the surface. It is like the poet's couplet: "*Al Alma'ī* who is suspicious of you as if he actually saw and heard!"

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[17] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and others.

[18] Indeed, they were information of the Unseen, by the knowledge that Allāh (ﷻ) gave him. The above-mentioned explanation has no support for it as long as the author, May Allāh (ﷻ) protect him, accepts the possibility of Allāh's informing him. The Ḥadīth itself contains the proof of this: the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "If your life is prolonged." Could this precise temporal definition be known by any "expert" if Allāh (ﷻ) did not grant him that information?

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) had a deep knowledge of people and their qualities, of the world and its stages, of time and its vicissitudes, of the earlier religions and what they and their adherents suffered in blazing their trail through life. The minds of the prophets were unblemished and sharpened and they had clear inspiration. So imagine what the highest of all prophets was like: Providence took care of him from birth and brought him up, so that he might bear the message whose miracle lay in its method and whose method was to purify the natures of people and sharpen their intellects.

❑ This made him the best person to evaluate the conditions of the time and expect what the future would hold. Is it possible for a traveller in the northern regions to expect the sky to be clear of heavy fog, or is it possible for a traveller in the equatorial regions to expect a hailstorm? How then is it worthy of the Prophet of a great religion to forget the persecution which affected his teachings and his followers, whether it was in the near or distant future, and whether it was blatant or hidden.

❑ Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) talked much about persecution, and his aim was not to prophesy it but to caution against it, suffering will affect people because of their different ways of thinking and their different personalities; suffering will occur because worldly pleasures will attract people who will rival one another for them; and suffering will affect the *Ummah* after unbelief regains its strength. He cautioned his Companions about all of these in ḥādīths too numerous to quote here.

❑ The gravest of all these sufferings is the decay which will set into the Islāmic teachings themselves.

Ṣalāh will lose its spirit which is humility then its body will be eroded and it will become absurd.

Jihād will lose its spirit, which is sincerity and will become a fight for booty and slaves; then it will lose its sharpness and be shelved.

Fasting will cease to be perseverance in a time of privation and self-control, and will become a time of feasting and double expenditure.

Government will change from being service to the people with their consent into making oneself their god by suppression and force. Then it will fall and both the ruler and the ruled will be destroyed.

Even the Muslims' love for their Prophet will become, after his death, a market place around his grave, full of awe-inspiring clamouring and droning.

❑ When I visited Madīnah I went to the Prophet's (ﷺ) grave. The feelings were flowing from my heart and ringing in my ears. As I caught sight of the grave I headed for it, feeling very humble as if I was a bull being rolled under the feet of some giant. I paid my respects in the prescribed manner and did not say anything else except one verse of poetry. I did not know how it came to me because of the emotional state I was in. My lips murmured it but my ears did not hear: "O you, best of all creation, whose bones are buried in the earth, the fragrance of which has caused the hills and plains to be fragrant." Then I went away.

❑ I saw, however, waves of people coming in and shouting long phrases. Someone was reading from a book, and another listening to someone who had memorized much; this one was disturbing that one, and everybody was disturbing the people at prayer. These waves were coming constantly and were never-ending.

❑ Was it not that which the Prophet (ﷺ) meant when he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), do not make my grave after me an idol to be worshipped."[19]

❑ As soon as I became aware of the condition of the visitors and residents in the Mosque, I almost stopped praying in it, for I

[19] A sound Hadīth narrated by Ahmad and Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqāt on the authority of Abū Hurairah (ﷺ).

detest most vehemently innovations, chaos and ignorance. I remembered the story of 'Urwah ibn Al Zubair:

When he built a castle in the vale of '*Afīq* and kept away from Madīnah, the people said to him: "You have forsaken the mosque of the Prophet (ﷺ)!"

He replied: "I saw your mosques being neglected, your markets overcrowded and lewdness wide spread in your streets. In the vale is a security from what you are involved in. It is said that when he was scolded about this, he replied: "What is left? All that is left are those who rejoice at the misfortune of others and who are jealous of the good fortune of others."

❑ We ask Allāh's pardon and refuge.

Chapter Two

From Birth to Prophethood

Muhammad (ﷺ) was born of a family of pure lineage and noble ancestry which combined all the good qualities of the Arabs and which held itself aloof from their evil tendencies. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said about himself:

"Surely Allāh (ﷻ) purified the *Kinānah* from the children of Ismāīl (ﷺ), purified the Quraish from among the *Kinānah*, purified the Banū Hāshim from among the Quraish and purified me from among the Banū Hashim."[1]

Noble ancestry does not grant status to those who are failures. It is like steel: when it is left to rust no benefit can be derived from it, but when crafts people utilize it they make it do wonders. Thus when the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked who was the noblest of people he replied:

"You ask me about the qualities of the Arabs?" They replied yes, so he said: "The best of them in (the days of) *jahilīyah* are the best of them in Islām if they acquire knowledge."[2]

❑ The Prophet's (ﷺ) birth in such a distinguished family was one of the means to success which Allāh (ﷻ) prepared for His Messenger. Early Arab society was based on keen tribalism which led a tribe to extinction in defence of its own honour and the honour of anyone allied to it. For a time Islām remained under the protection of these long-observed traditions until it was able to stand on its own feet, just as a plant is no longer in need of the pot when grows sturdy and tall. Even Lūt (ﷺ) had wished that such traditions were in existence when he felt the danger to his guests and could find no clan to extend protection to them. At that point he said to his people:

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[1] A sound Hadīth narrated by Muslim on the authority of Wā'ila ibn Al Asqa'. It is also declared sound by Al Tirmidhī.

[2] A sound Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah (ﷺ).

﴾And his people came rushing towards him, and since aforetime they used to commit crimes [sodomy], he said: "O my people! Here are my daughters [i.e. the women of the nation], they are purer for you [if you marry them lawfully]. So fear Allāh and degrace me not with regard to my guest! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?" ﴿ (Qur'ān 11: 78)

Thereafter he said:

﴾Would that I had strength to resist you or had some strong support [among you].!﴿ (Qur'ān 11: 80)

❑ In spite of his noble lineage, however, Muhammad (ﷺ) did not have great wealth. It was this lack of wealth combined with his nobility which enabled him to acquire the best traits of all classes of people. The sons of noble families are led by their wealth to become haughty. If they lose this weapon, though they will still have their noble traditions and status which they will sacrifice their utmost to maintain.

One of them says: "Because of the vicissitudes of time which affect us, we resist any calamities for fear of being disgraced. Some of them may find nothing shameful in announcing their poverty or letting their circumstances be known. Nevertheless, there are others who keep their grief to themselves and show a determined face to the world. Such a one was 'Abdul Muṭṭalib.

❑ 'Abdul Muṭṭalib was the chief of Makkah. However, this chiefdom which he inherited ended with him and was not passed on to his descendants. Their rivals for the leadership of Makkah vied fiercely with them and it seemed as if they would take it over entirely. In a few years 'Abd Shams came to power. Yet no sooner had another few years passed than the leadership fell into the hands of Abū Sufyān and remained out of the control of Banū Hāshim.

❑ 'Abdullāh was the youngest of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib's sons and was greatly loved by him. He married him to Āminah bint Wahb and then left him to make his own way in life. After only a few

months of marriage 'Abdullāh left on a trading journey, and as it was summer, he went with a caravan to Syria. He never returned. The caravan came back with the news of his sickness and soon after came the news of his death. Āminah was awaiting her strong, youthful husband to tell him the news of her pregnancy and the joy they would soon have of their first child. However, fate for a higher purpose ended these sweet dreams. The wife who was once envied now became a widow, and she began counting the days when her only child, an orphan, would be born into this unpredictable life.

❑ Al Zuhri reports that 'Abdul Muṭṭalib sent his son 'Abdullāh to Yathrib to buy their ration of dates and he died there. Others say he was in Syria from where he travelled to Yathrib with the caravan of the Quraish. In Madīnah he fell sick and died and was buried in the precinct of al Nabigha Al Ja'di. He died at the age of 25 years and before the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was born.

❑ Muhammad's (ﷺ) birth at Makkah was ordinary. There was nothing in it to attract attention or cause astonishment. The historians have not been able to pinpoint precisely the day, month or year of his birth. However, most sources are inclined to the year when Makkah was attacked by the Abyssinians, which corresponded to 570 of the Christian Era. The date of his birth is set at 12 Rabi'i al Awwal 53 BH, that is, before the Ḥijra.

❑ The exact date of the Prophet's (ﷺ) birth has no religious significance in Islām, and the celebrations held on this occasion are a worldly tradition which has nothing to do with the *Sharī 'ah.* Some sources report that premonitions of his prophethood occurred when he was born: fourteen balconies of Khosrau's palace collapsed; the fire worshipped by the Zoroastrians went out; and the churches around Lake Sawah crumbled after the lake dried up. Al Busiri says:[3]

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[3] A poet famous for his *Qasidat al Burda* in praise of the Prophet (ﷺ) (Translator).

The event of his birth disclosed the purity of his origin
O What a good beginning and a good end!
That day when the Persians perceived
The premonition of disaster and destruction,
And there appeared cracks in the palace of Khosrau,
Disunited just like the henchmen of Khosrau,
And the fire went out in regret for it,
And the river dried up,
And Sawah became sad at the drying up of its lake,
And everyone coming to it for a drink felt angry with thirst.

These words are the wrong expression of a correct idea. The birth of Muhammad (ﷺ) was truly a proclamation of the fall of tyranny and the end of its reign. So also was the birth of Moses (ﷺ). Do you not see that when Allāh (ﷻ) described Pharaoh's tyranny over his people and announced His intention of freeing the slaves and the oppressed, He unfolded to us the story of the hero who would undertake this task? Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴾**And We inspired the mother of Moses.**﴿ (Qur'ān 28: 7)

❑ Muhammad's (ﷺ) mission was the most momentous of all revolutions known to the world, which undertook a mental and physical liberation of mankind. The Qur'ān recruited the most upright of men ever known in history and directed their efforts towards disposing of all the dictators one by one. After this liberation from the yokes of dictatorship, when the people wished to outline what actually happened, they imagined the occurrence of these premonitions and invented tales to fit them. Muhammad (ﷺ) is not in need of any of this, the great role that he plays now in our present age makes us think little of such tales.

❑ 'Abdul Muṭṭalib received the news of his grandson's birth with exuberance and joy. Maybe it compensated him for his son who had died in the prime of life and so he turned his affection from the past to the newcomer and showed pride and concern in him. It was amazing that he should be inspired to name his

grandson Muhammad (ﷺ),[4] a name probably inspired by a noble angel! The Arabs heard this name for the first time and they asked the grandfather why he did not choose the name of one of his ancestors.

He replied: "I wanted Allāh (ﷻ) to praise him in the heavens and mankind to praise him on earth. This wish was a perception of the future, for no one of Allāh's (ﷻ) creation is so deserving of the sentiments of thanks and praise for what he accomplished as much as that Arab Prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ).

❑ Abū Ḥurairah (ؓ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Do you not wonder at how Allāh (ﷻ) diverts from me the curses and abuses of the Quraish? They abuse Mudhammam and I am Muhammad (ﷺ)!"[5]

❑ However, the harsh reality still remained in spite of the loving grandfather's attention. Muhammad (ﷺ) was an orphan, born after his father had left this world. So be it! If we supposed that 'Abdullāh had remained alive, then what would he have done for his son? Could he have trained him to become a Prophet? Of course not: the father is only one of a number of factors which determine the future of a child. Even if prophethood could be acquired through effort, his father's being alive would not make it more achievable, so what about when it is in fact a selection [made by Allāh (ﷻ)]?

❑ While Ya'qūb was alive he was provided for. He reached old age and acquired experience and wisdom. In fact, he was granted prophethood. One day he looked round and did not see Yūsuf (ؑ) next to him: he had lost him in the most crucial period of his life. Yūsuf (ؑ) was a young lad full of zeal and energy, and in spite of the corruption which prevailed in those

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[4] He gave him this name on the seventh day after his birth after circumcising him.

[5] A sound Ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī. The Quraish used to say Mudhammam (the blameworthy) instead of Muhammad (ﷺ) (the praiseworthy) when referring to the Prophet (ﷺ) (Translator).

societies through which he passed, his inner being still overflowed with piety and chastity. He was like a bright lamp on a dark night. When father and son met again, Ya'qub saw his son as a staunch prophet.

❑ 'Abdullāh passed away, leaving his son an orphan. Nevertheless, this orphan was being prepared from the first moment for a noble task. He was being prepared as the leader of all the righteous people chosen by Allāh (ﷻ). Father and grandfather, relatives and friends, heavens and earth were nothing but means which Allāh (ﷻ) utilized to accomplish His decree and to shower His bounty on the one whom He himself fashioned.

❑ Āminah showered her affection on her son, patiently awaiting the best nurses who would come from the desert, seeking to be the guardians of the children of the nobility. These bedouin women who went to Makkah for this purpose were looking for sustenance and good pay. Muhammad (ﷺ) however, had no father from whom gifts could be expected, nor did he have wealth to attract them. So it is no wonder that these went nurses turned away from him and sought other children. Ḥalīmah, daughter of Abū Dhu'aib of the tribe of the Banu Sa'd, was one of those who came to Makkah, wishing to return with an infant who would be her means of sustenance. At first she was not pleased to take the orphan, although when she could not find any other child she felt ashamed of returning home empty-handed. So she went back to Āmina and took Muhammad (ﷺ) from her.

❑ There was untold blessing in his coming with her. Before that, her life had been one of hunger and hardship. Now Allāh (ﷻ) showered His mercy on her and bestowed on her many benefits: the animals started giving plenty of milk after they had been dry, and her life became one of ease and fertility. Ḥalīmah, her husband and her son felt that their return from Makkah was one of the blessings and gain, not poverty and orphanhood. They thus became very attached to the child and were proud of him.

❑ The upbringing of children in the desert, where they can play in the pastures of nature and enjoy its pure air, is best for the natural development of their bodies and minds, and the freeing of their thoughts and feelings from prejudices. It is unfortunate that Saudi children should live in suffocating apartments in buildings all crammed together as boxes, sealing in their inhabitants and preventing them from enjoying and breathing the refreshing air. There is no doubt that one of the causes of the neurosis which has affected modern civilization is its being so unnatural and steeped in artificiality. We therefore appreciate the tendency of the people of Makkah to make the desert and its wide expanses the nursery for their children. Many educational psychologists would like to see nature as the first cradle for children so that their faculties may develop in with the realities of creation in which they find themselves. However, this seems to be a dream hard to realize.

The Opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Chest

Muhammad (ﷺ) spent five years with the Banu Sa'd during which time he developed a healthy body and grew fast. These were the first five years of his life so it is not expected that anything strange should occur in that time. The authentic accounts of his life, however, do record an incident which came to be known as the opening of his chest. Anas (ﷺ) reports:

"Jibrīl (ﷺ) came to Muhammad (ﷺ) while he was playing with other boys. Jibrīl (ﷺ) held him, threw him down, opened his chest, took out his heart and removed a lump from it.
He said: "This is Satan's portion of you."

Then he washed him in a basin made of gold with the water of *Zamzam*. Then he sealed his chest and returned him to where he was. The boys ran to his mother (meaning his nurse) and shouted that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed. They came to

him and found him pale.[6]

❑ This incident, which scared Ḥalīmah and her husband, we find recurring when Muhammad (ﷺ) had become a Prophet and was over 50 years old. Mālik ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) told them about the night of the *Isrā'*, saying:

"While I was in Al Ḥatīm perhaps he said in Al Ḥajr reclining between sleep and wakefulness, someone came to me and split me from here to here (meaning from the hollow of his neck to his stomach) and extracted my heart. I was brought a basin of gold filled with faith, my heart was washed, then filled with it, then it was returned to its position."[7]

❑ If evil were the secretions of a gland in the body and could be prevented by stopping the secretions, or if good were a substance which could be poured into the heart as fuel is poured into an aeroplane to make it fly, then I should say the literal sense of the words should be taken. Evil and good are beyond the physical, however, and in fact it is obvious that it has more to do with the spiritual side of people. If it is a matter concerning the limits within which the soul has to operate or, in other words, if the study takes us to the point where we must discover the means by which the soul motivates its outer covering of flesh and blood, then it is no use pursuing it since this is beyond our capacity of discovery.

❑ There is one thing which we can extract from these ḥadīths: that the Providence does not leave an outstanding human being like Muhammad (ﷺ) to be the target of subtle whisperings which cause confusion among other people. If there are waves of evil filling the atmosphere and if there are hearts quick to absorb them or are swayed by them, despite this, however, the hearts of the Prophets (ﷺ) by Allāh's care of them will not receive or be

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[6] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad, who has the addition: Anas (ﷺ) said: "I used to see the mark of the needle in his chest. The Ḥadīth is reported from many authentic sources.

[7] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and Al Nasā'ī.

affected by these currents. Thus the efforts of the prophets will be directed towards constant progress and not resistance to evil; towards purifying the people from evil, not self-purification, since Allāh (ﷻ) has already cleansed them of pollution.

❑ 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"There is nobody at all who has not been assigned a Companion from the Jinn and Companion from the angels.
They asked: "And you too, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?"
He replied, "And me too. But Allāh (ﷻ) has helped me to overcome him and he has submitted. Now he orders me to only good things."[8]

In another Ḥadīth 'Ā'ishah reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked her:

"Were you jealous?"
And she replied: "Why shouldn't someone like me be jealous of someone like you?"
The Prophet (ﷺ) then said to her: "Your devil has come to you."
She said: "Is there a devil within me?"
He replied: "Everyone has a devil within him."
She said: "And you?"
He said: "Yes. But Allāh (ﷻ) has helped me to overcome him and he has surrendered." [9]

Perhaps the significance of the Ḥadīth which tells of the incident of the opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) chest is that they highlight the care with which Allāh (ﷻ) nurtured His Prophet (ﷺ) and made him from childhood free from the defects of human nature and worldly temptations.

❑ Al Khāzin quoted the first-mentioned incident, that is, the opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) chest during childhood, in his commentary on Chapter 94 of the Qur'ān:

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[8] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim.

[9] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim.

﴾**Have We not caused your chest to dilate**﴿ (Qur'ān 94: 1)

The dilation of the chest to which these āyāt (verses) refer are not the result of a surgical operation carried out by an angel or a doctor. The metaphorical expressions in the Sunnah deserve some attention at this point. 'Ā'ishah reports that some of the Prophet's (ﷺ) wives said:

❑ O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), which of us will be the quickest to catch up with you (that is, die after you)?"

❑ He replied: "That one among you who has the longest hand." So they took a reed to measure their hands and it was Saudah who had the longest hand. Afterwards we learnt that a long hand meant the charity which she gave out. She loved to give charity and she was the quickest of us to catch up with him.[10]

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) returned to Makkah after spending some wonderful years in the desert. He returned to find a loving mother who dedicated herself to him and an aged grandfather who sought consolation in him for his son who had passed away in the prime of life. However, days refused to allow him tranquillity among these tender hearts and one by one deprived him of them. Āminah thought of visiting her husband's grave in Yathrib in faithfulness to his memory, and so she left Makkah on this journey of 500 kilometres, taking with her son Muhammad (ﷺ) and her maid Umm Aiman. 'Abdullāh did not die in a strange land but it was the land of his maternal uncles, the Banu Najjar. Ibn Athir reports.

Ḥāshim went on a trading trip to Syria. On his way he

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[10] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī through Masrūq from 'Ā'ishah. His version, however, reads: "She was the quickest of us to catch up with him and she loved to give charity. Muslim also narrated this Ḥadīth through 'Ā'ishah bint Ṭalha, and Al Hākim through 'Amrah, both of whom reported it from 'Ā'ishah In their narration, though, they say: "the one with the longest hand among us was Zainab because she used to work with her hands and give charity. This contradicts Bukhārī's report, from which we gather that Saudah was the first to die after the Prophet (ﷺ). But this is a clear mistake for Ibn Ḥajar's investigation shows that Muslim's narration is the authentic one. Who ever wishes to see the full investigation can refer to Ibn Ḥajar's *Fatḥ al Bari*. The Zainab referred to here is Bint Jahsh, not Bint Khuzaima as some people have misunderstood.

stopped in Madīnah and stayed with 'Amr ibn Lubaid of the Khazraj tribe. There he saw Salma, daughter of 'Amr and fell in love with her. He married her under a stipulation made by her father: that she should give birth to her children only in the home of her relatives. Ḥāshim went on his way, and on his return he consummated the marriage with her, then took her to Makkah where she conceived a child. When the time for her delivery approached, he took her back to her relatives and went to Syria. He died in Ghaza and Ṣalma gave birth to 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, who remained for seven years in Madīnah.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) spent about one month among his mother's relatives near his father's grave, and then he set out to return to Makkah. From the start of the journey, however, his mother became seriously ill. She died at Abwā, leaving him alone with the bereaved maid. He was then 5 years of age. This new misfortune caused old scars to reopen and sharpened the feelings of tenderness which 'Abdul Muṭṭalib had for the young boy. From then on he never left him alone, but took him along to all his public gatherings. When he sat on his mat beside the Kaba he held the boy close while all the elders sat around him. Abdul Muṭṭalib lived a long time, and it is said that he died at the age of 120 years. Nevertheless, when he died, Muhammad (ﷺ) was only nearing his eighth year. Before he died, 'Abdul Muṭṭalib thought it best to entrust the boy's uncle Abū Tālib with the care of the boy.

❑ Abū Ṭālib carried out his duty toward his nephew to the best of his ability. He included him among his sons and even preferred him to them. For over forty years he continued to support and protect him and to befriend or oppose on his behalf. Muhammad (ﷺ) grew up in Abū Ṭālib's home and acquired a deep understanding of his environment. He insisted on sharing the burdens of life with his uncle since Abū Ṭālib was not wealthy and had many children. When Abū Ṭālib decided to travel to Syria for trade, Muhammad (ﷺ) insisted on going with him although he was only about 13 years old.

Baḥīra, the Monk

There are no authentic accounts of the details of this journey. Travelling is one of the most fertile gateways to knowledge and has the deepest effects. The lessons would not have escaped a person like Muhammad (ﷺ) with his keen mind and pure heart in all that he saw at home or on his travels. It is certain, however, that he did not go out to study religion or philosophy nor did he meet anyone with whom he could discuss these matters. The history books relate some strange occurrences which happened to him, such as his encounter with the monk Baḥīra. This man saw in his face and on his back the signs of prophethood.

He asked Abū Ṭālib, "What is this boy to you?"

Abū Ṭālib replied, "my son."

He said, "His father should not be alive!"

Abū Ṭālib then said, "Infact he is the son of my brother who died when the child's mother was still pregnant with him.

The monk said: "Now you have spoken the truth. Take him back to your country and be careful of the Jews over him."

❑ This story may be authentic since the news of a Prophet after Jesus is to be found in the Bible of the Christians. Ever since they rejected Muhammad's (ﷺ) message they have been awaiting the expected prophet but he will never come because he has already come. Whether this story of Baḥīra is authentic or not,[11] the fact is that it left no after-effects, for neither did Muhammad (ﷺ) start to aspire to or prepare for prophethood after hearing the monk nor did the travellers in the caravan spread this news. It was forgotten as if it never happened, and this makes it more likely to be unauthentic.

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[11] It is indeed authentic because Al Tirmidhī narrated it on the authority of Abū Mūsā Al Ash'arī and he certified it as a good Ḥadīth. Furthermore, I say it has a sound chain as Al Jazari said. The latter also said "The mention of Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and Bilāl (ﷺ) in it is not recorded (i.e. not authentic)." I also add that Al Bazzār narrated it with the following words: "His uncle sent a man with him."

❑ It is also reported that a party of Roman horsemen came to Baḥīra as if they were searching for something.

When he asked them what they came for, they said, "We have come because a prophet will appear this month and men have been sent in all directions to arrest him. Baḥīra argued with them until he was able to convince them that their search was futile.

❑ The investigators! Who are these investigators? And where did the fabrication come from? This account is in the above-mentioned Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Mūsā (ﷺ) and you have seen that this is authentic. What is wrong in this similarity to the Christians if it is proved to be authentic? Does not the story of Pharaoh's search for Moses in order to kill him, which comes in the Qur'ān, resemble what the Bible-writers say? Should we then reject this story because of this resemblance?

No. Although I appreciate Sheikh Nāṣiruddīn's comments, I shall quote here what some of the scholars and investigators say about this story:

❑ Al Jazari states, as already quoted by Sheikh Nāṣiruddīn: "Its chain is sound and its narrators are those of the authentic tradition or one of them. But the mention of Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and Bilāl (ﷺ) in it is not authentic according to our *imāms*, and this is true. The Prophet's (ﷺ) age at that time was 12 years and Abū Bakr (ﷺ) was younger than he by two years, and perhaps Bilāl (ﷺ) was not born yet!"

❑ Al Dhahabi says in *Mizanul I'tidal*: "It is said that one of the proofs that this Ḥadīth is not authentic is the statement "And Abū Bakr (ﷺ) sent Bilāl (ﷺ) with him' Bilāl (ﷺ) was not yet created and Abū Bakr (ﷺ) was only a young boy."

❑ The author of *Tuhfatul Ahwadhi* says: "Al Dhahabi considered this Ḥadīth to be weak because of the statement: 'And Abū Bakr (ﷺ) sent Bilāl (ﷺ) with him,' since Abū Bakr (ﷺ) had not at that time purchased Bilāl (ﷺ).

❑ Ibn Ḥajar says in his Al Isābah: "Its narrators are trustworthy and it contains nothing questionable except this point. It is

possible that this piece was taken from another Ḥadīth and inserted here by one of its narrators unintentionally."

There is a similar statement to this in *Al Mawahib Al Ladunniyah*.

❑ Ibn al Qayyim says in *Zādul Ma'ād*: "In Al Tirmidhī's book as well as others it is stated that Abū Bakr (ﷺ) sent Bilāl (ﷺ) with him. This is clear mistake. Bilāl (ﷺ) was probably not in existence and even if he was, he certainly was not with the Prophet's (ﷺ) uncle or with Abū Bakr (ﷺ)." See *Tuhfatul Ahwadhi*.

Now, Ibn Kathīr says in his *sīrah*: "This Ḥadīth is narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Al Ḥākim, Al Baihaqi and Ibn 'Asakir. I say, (i.e. Ibn Kathīr says) this Ḥadīth is unusual: it is *mursal* (i.e. the *Ṣaḥabī* who narrates it does not say it comes from the Prophet (ﷺ) but this may be understood). Abū Mūsā Al Asha'ari only came to Madīnah in the year when Khaybar was conquered (7 AH), so in any case it is *mursal*.

❑ Therefore the Ḥadīth is *mu'allal* (contains a weak point according to the principles of the Ḥadīth scholars) asserts that this Ḥadīth is fabricated, similar to what the gospel-writers say about some people who were looking for Jesus soon after his birth in order to kill him. The Christians took this from the Buddhists who say that the Buddha, when his virgin mother gave birth to him, was sought by his enemies who wanted to kill him!

❑ The scholars of the Sunnah investigate all statements from both the point of view of their meaning as well as their chain of narrators, and if they are unable to verify their authenticity they set them aside. Many myths have become attached to the biographies of the prophets and if they were to be scrutinized according to the rules laid down in the Ḥadīth sciences, they would be proved unauthentic and they could be justifiably discarded.

A Life of Toil

Muhammad (ﷺ) returned from this trip to resume his life of toil with his uncle, for it was not the habit of men to sit idle. The prophets before him used to eat from the labour of their own hands and they did different crafts to earn their living. It is correct that Muhammad (ﷺ) worked as a shepherd in his early life.

Of this he said: "I used to graze sheep for the people of Makkah in return for a few carats. It is also true that a number of prophets used to graze sheep.[12] Perhaps this was what accustomed them to leadership of the people: gentleness to the weak and wakefulness for their protection.

Perhaps this was what accustomed them to leadership of the people: gentleness to the weak and wakefulness for their protection.

❑ You may wonder if all the realities of the universe and what is beyond it and knowledge of the mankind and all that they are concerned with were suddenly poured into the hearts of the prophet without prior and systematic preparation? The answer is, of course not. Even though the prophets did not acquire knowledge by the same means and laws as we do, they had a sound ability to think and reason, and this put them in the forefront of all educated people. What is the knowledge that elevates one's soul? Is it the memorization of lessons and the absorption of principles and laws? There are many parrots who repeat all they hear without understanding. At times we witness small children who memorize perfectly and are able to recite the speeches of the most famous politicians and leaders. Neither do the children become great men because of what they memorize nor do the parrots become human beings.

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[12] Bukhārī narrates on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is no Prophet sent by Allāh (ﷻ) who did not tend sheep."
His Companions asked: "And did you?"
He replied: "Yes. I used to graze them for the people of Makkah in return for a few carats."

❑ You may find someone who learns and understands, argues and wins. Even so, knowledge in itself is like the veins of gold in a neglected piece of rock. It neither promotes good nor prevents evil. The Qur'ān likened to donkeys the Jewish rabbis who carry the Torah and do not discipline themselves by it:

﴾The likeness of those who are entrusted with the Law of Moses, yet do not apply it, is as the likeness of the donkey carrying books.﴿ (Qur'ān 62: 5)

Those people who have knowledge but do not reform themselves by it are actually doing it an injustice. Thus it is good to withhold it from such people. A Ḥadīth says:

"The one who gives knowledge to those who do not deserve it is like the person who adorns pigs with jewels, pearls and gold."[13]

❑ Then there are those people who believe in fables and reject realities. Their brains are like a pair of scales, one side of which is heavy for no reason and thus cannot weigh correctly. They freely accept the impossibilities and attack the realities. I have seen people who have studied continually, but when they are confronted with problems they grope around blindly. On the other hand, when these same problems are presented to people in the street who remain unblemished in their nature and reasoning, they immediately hit the nail on the head. The significance of this is that there are people who spend twenty years trying to straighten their intellect, study and research, yet they are unable to reach the status of someone who was granted uprightness in thought by mother nature.

❑ I am convinced, by my readings of the life of Muhammad (ﷺ), that he was of a special category of people who are clear-

[13] A very weak Ḥadīth. Ibn 'Abdul Barr left it undecided in his *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm*, and also Ibn Majah. In its chain of narrators is Ḥafs ibn Sulaiman al Asadi, about whom Ibn Kharrash says: "He is a liar who invents Ḥadīth. Others declare him to be weak. Abū Ḥatim says he is rejected, and a similar statement is made in *Al Taqrīb* by Ibn Hajar.

thinking and of keen perception. He was living with an open and wakeful heart in the depths of the desert; sober among drunkards and negligent people, before and after tending sheep, and before and after going into trade.

❑ The atmosphere of the Arabian peninsula was such that it nurtured the lethargy of the lethargic and the keenness of the keen, just as the sun's rays nurture the thorns side by side with the roses. Muhammad (ﷺ) sought the assistance of its long silence which stretched across the days and nights and across the sands and oases to think long and deep and seek out the truth where it lay. The degree of mental development which one reaches from constant observation is undoubtedly much higher than that of memorization without understanding or understanding without discipline. Moreover, someone like the Prophet (ﷺ), who respects the natural laws of life and the universe, is more worthy of being selected than any of those who believe in superstition and live by it.

❑ There is no doubt that Providence surrounded him with protection so that he might keep to this unique orientation. Whenever he inclined towards some worldly enjoyment, which was really no serious crime, Providence came between him and the fulfilment of it. Ibn Athīr narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Only twice did I ever attempt to do something which the people of *jahiliyah* used to do, and on both occasions Allāh (ﷻ) prevented me from doing it. Thereafter I never attempted such things until Allāh (ﷻ) blessed me with the role of His Messenger (ﷺ). One night I said to the boy who was grazing sheep with me in upper Makkah: "Will you watch my sheep for me so that I can go into Makkah and spend the night as the youths do."

He agreed and I went off. When I reached the first house in Makkah I heard some music, and I asked: "What is this?" They said, "So-and-so's wedding with so-and-so."

I sat down to listen but Allāh (ﷻ) sealed my hearing and I fell asleep. It was only the heat of the sun which woke me. I went to my companion and he asked me (about the night) and I told him. Another night I did the same and went into Makkah but the same thing happened to me as on the previous night. After that I never attempted to do anything wrong."[14]

❑ The various levels of education are stages in a continual struggle to discipline one's mind and strengthen its faculties and to correct one's outlook on the universe, life and living things. Thus every educational system which fails to take its students to this peak is not worthy of attention in spite of its beautiful certificates. What is much more worthy of being honoured and much nearer to the ultimate goal is that people should attain a high level of intelligence, and the capacity to think deeply, and have a clear vision of means and ends. The Qur'ān referred to Prophet Ibrahīm's (Abraham) (ﷺ) abundance of these qualities when it said:

﴾And indeed We gave Abraham of old his proper course, and We were Aware of him, When he said to his father and his people: what are these images to which you devote yourselves?﴿
(Qur'ān 21: 51-52)

❑ In this respect Muhammad (ﷺ) was like his forefather Ibrāhīm (Abraham). He did not acquire knowledge from any monk or sorcerer or philosopher of his age. Instead he scrutinized the pages of life and the condition of people and groups with his fertile intellect and pure nature, rejected all superstition and evil things and associated with people on the basis of understanding. Whatever he found good, he participated in it to some extent, otherwise he would withdraw into his accustomed seclusion and resume his constant contemplation of the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. This was better for

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[14] A weak Hadīth narrated by Al Ḥākim through Ibn Is-ḥāq.

him than those kinds of knowledge which may be termed as compound ignorance, and better than a society which had had no guide for centuries and every day was thus adding a new form of corruption to the old ones. He saw nothing wrong in taking part in the general affairs of his people, such as the Sacrilegious War in which he assisted his uncles and the Alliance of the Virtuous which came in its aftermath.

The Sacrilegious War

As far as the Quraish were concerned, this war was in defence of the sanctity of the sacred months and the Holy Land. These symbols were the remains of the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham), which the Arabs still respected. The respect shown to these sanctuaries was the source of great benefit for them, and a guarantee for the protection of their interests and the settling of their disputes. A man would meet his father's murderer in the sacred month and his consciousness of this sanctity would restrain him from seeking revenge. When Islām came, it approved of these heritages of the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ):

﴾Behold! The number of months with Allāh is twelve months by Allāh's ordinance on the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred: that is the right religion. So do not indulge in wrong doing during that time.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 36)

❑ However, the people of *Jahilīyah* soon encountered those people who violated the sanctities and indulged in wrong doing. The Sacrilegious War was one of the consequences of this blatant violation. There are no details about this war except that it lasted four years. Muhammad's (ﷺ) age at that time was between 15 and 19 years. Some sources claim that he himself fought, and others claim that he only assisted the fighters.

The Alliance of the Virtuous

This alliance is proof that no matter how dismal the pages of life become and how widespread the evils, it will never be devoid of those noble souls who arouse the sympathy and kindness of society. In that sterile *jahilīyah* there arose some promoters of good, and they made a pact among themselves to establish justice, fight oppression and revive the virtuous qualities which had been obliterated in the Holy Land. Ibn Athīr said:

"Thereafter some of the clans of the Quraish called for this alliance, and they all swore to it in the house of 'Abdullāh ibn Jad'an because of his virtue and age. They were: the Banū Ḥāshim, Banū Muṭṭalib, Banū Asad ibn 'Abdul 'Uzza, Zuhrah ibn Kilāb and Taym ibn Murrah. They formed the alliance and pledged to one another that if ever they found a wronged person in Makkah, whether from their own people or from any other tribe, they would stand by his side and defend him so that the wrong done to him might be redressed. This pact was called the Alliance of the Virtuous by the Quraish, and was witnessed by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)."

After Allāh (ﷻ) chose him as Prophet, he said: "I witnessed an alliance with my uncles in the home of 'Abdullāh ibn Jad'an and I should not like to exchange it for the choicest luxuries. If I were called in Islām to participate in it, I should respond.[15]

❑ One can see clearly in these words of the Prophet (ﷺ) his approval of this alliance. Vehemence against any oppressor, no matter how powerful he or she may be, and sympathy for any oppressed person, no matter how insignificant he or she may be, are the spirit of Islām. Islām enjoins good and forbids evil, and

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[15] Narrated by Ibn Is-ḥāq and Ibn Hishām in their biographies of the Prophet (ﷺ). Their chains of narrators are sound except that they are *mursal* [i.e. the *Ṣaḥabī* who reported it did not say he heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ)]. However, comes from other sources too which strengthen its authenticity. Aḥmad narrated it from 'Abdul Rahmān ibn 'Auf, who said he heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ), although it does not contain the statement " If I were called in Islām to participate in it, I should respond". Its chain is authentic.

confines itself to the limits set by Allāh (ﷻ). It is Islām's duty to fight injustice in the politics of nations and the relationships between human beings with the same fervour.

❑ It is said of the cause of this alliance that a man from Zubayd, who came with some merchandise and sold it to Al 'Asī ibn Wa'il al Sahmi, but the latter refused to pay for them. Although the man pleaded with the clans of the Quraish and their allies to help him, no one paid him any attention. So the wronged stranger stood in front of the Ka'bah and repeated some couplets of poetry bewailing his misfortune.

❑ On hearing this, Al Zubayr ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib got up and said: "Is there nobody to assist him?" He gathered together those whom Ibn Athīr mentioned above, and after concluding the Alliance of the Virtuous, they went to Al Asī ibn Wā'il and demanded the man's due from him. Al Asī seems to have been an unsavoury, evasive fellow for he had also made a deal with Khabbāb ibn-ul Aratt. Khabbāb was a blacksmith who had made a sword for Al Asī.

When he went to him and asked for payment for it, Al Asī said: "I shall not pay you until you disbelieve in Muhammad (ﷺ).

❑ Khabbāb replied: "I shall not disbelieve until Allāh (ﷻ) causes you to die and resurrects you."

❑ Al Asī said: "Am I going to die and be resurrected?." Khabbāb replied yes. So Al Asī said: "Let me die and be resurrected, then I shall have great wealth and many children and I shall pay you for the sword."

❑ The following āyāt (verses) were then revealed:

﴾Have you seen him who disbelieves in Our Revelation and says: Assuredly I shall be given wealth and children? Has he perused the Unseen, or has he made a pact with the Beneficent? No, but We shall record what he says and prolong for him a span of torment. And We shall inherit from him that of which he spoke, and he shall come to Us alone [Without his wealth and children].﴿
(Qur'ān 19: 77-80)

There were many like Al Asī in trade and politics, and Muhammad (ﷺ) was the best man to oppose and confront them, and the best men to be were Muhammad's (ﷺ) Companions, those who helped him against such people and pledged with him to fight them.

Strength and Activity

When the Sacrilegious War ended and the Alliance of the Virtuous was concluded, Muhammad (ﷺ) was entering the third stage of his life. This was the period of zealous youthfulness, active instincts and far-reaching ambitions. Muhammad (ﷺ) was a man with a strong body, tall stature and determination. His amazing strength was noticed even forty years afterwards. Abū Ḥurairah (ؓ) said:

"I never saw anybody more handsome than the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). It was as if the sun was shining in his face! And I never saw anyone walk more quickly than the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). It was as if the earth folded itself up for him!
Whenever we walked with him, we would exert ourselves while he stayed cool."[16]

❑ Such a man attracts life to himself even if he is not attracted to life. Beside him who should attract life? Should life be attracted to dreamers, introverts and pessimists? Muhammad (ﷺ), however, in spite of the means at his disposal to enjoy life, was not swayed by fleeting lusts or burning desires, and it was never recorded of him that he made any attempt to attain position or wealth. On the contrary, his life began by illuminating Makkah with the qualities which distinguished him over his contemporaries: a sweet disposition, a noble character, deep thought, sound reasoning and a trustworthy attitude.

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[16] This Ḥadīth has a weak chain. It is narrated by Al Tirmidhī in his *Sunan* and *Shamā'il*. He declared it to be weak because one of its narrators was Ibn Luhai'ah, who is weak because his memory was bad and his books were burnt.

❑ It is not nobility that human desires for the goodness in life should be non existent, or existent without the means to satisfy it. Nobility means that the power of chastity should be stronger than the power of desire. Thus if one's soul remains in a state of tranquillity, it means that the internal negative and positive forces have balanced each other. We may see flighty people who can never keep their desires or instincts in check, yet if they are compared with the controlled desires of others, they would not reach one-tenth of their strength. The fact is that the latter have found the strength of character to control their desires, whereas the former have no intelligence to warn them nor the strength of character to stay away, so their desires rebel and overrule them.

❑ Although Muhammad's (ﷺ) manhood was of the highest perfection, his moral and spiritual purity endowed it with the good qualities of discipline, uprightness and contentment. Moreover, he was free from those hateful psychological complications which affect the youth: they love greatness with pomp and show and they seek leadership with flattery and the purchasing of sentiments. If we add to that his fierce dislike for the idols which were worshipped by his people, his contempt for the myths and superstitions which prevailed throughout and beyond the Arabian peninsula, and his awareness that truth was something totally different from all that, it becomes clear to us why he preferred the mountains and the open air, why he felt comfort in grazing sheep in these far-off places and was content with the little earnings he gained from them.

❑ Is this abstention from wealth and worldly life? Of course not. It is engrossment with the higher realities with which worldly life is reformed and to which wealth is subjugated. Great men are not satisfied with treasures of gold and silver when they are thirsty for the truth. They do not feel any profit in being kings over their people when they see evil dragging everyone's life into an abyss and stripping them of all goodness and uprightness.

❑ In this manner Muhammad (ﷺ) entered the third phase of his life. It was the phase in which he became acquainted with his first wife, Khadījah bint Khuwaylid.

Khadījah

Khadījah was an excellent example of a woman who completes the life of a great man. Those men with great roles to play are endowed with extremely sensitive hearts and they encounter terrible stupidity from the environment they wish to change, and undergo a tremendous struggle on behalf of the good they wish to establish. They are the people most in need of someone to shower their private lives with love and comfort, as well as understanding and assistance. Khadījah was foremost in these attributes and she had a positive effect on Muhammad's (ﷺ) life. Ibn Athīr said:

"Khadījah was merchant woman of nobility and wealth. She used to employ men to run her business and she would agree on their portion of the profit. When she heard of the Prophet's (ﷺ) truthfulness, trustworthiness and noble character, she sent for him, asking him to go as a trader for her to Syria. She gave him better wages than she used to give others, and he had with him her slave Maysarah.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) accepted this offer and travelled to Syria as a trader for the mistress who had selected him. It appears that he was more successful on this trip than on his previous one with his uncle Abū Ṭālib. Khadījah's profit was greater and she was pleased with his performance. However, her admiration for the man whom she tested was much deeper.

❑ She was a woman of noble lineage and vast wealth, and she was known for her determination and intelligence. Although she was desired by the leaders of the Quraish, what she despised in most men was that they were seeking her wealth and not herself. When she saw Muhammad (ﷺ), however, she learnt of another

brand of men. She had found a man who was not swayed by want. Perhaps when she settled her trading accounts with other men she found greed and trickery. In Muhammad (ﷺ), she saw a man whose character was spotless and who did not desire her wealth or beauty. He handed over all that he had for her and went away well - pleased and pleasing.

❑ Khadījah found in him what she was looking for. She spoke her mind to her friend Nafīsah bint Munabbah, who went to Muhammad (ﷺ) and spoke to him about marrying Khadījah. He did not delay in announcing his approval, then he consulted his uncles about it, and Abū Ṭālib, Ḥamzah and others went to Khadījah's uncle 'Amr ibn Asad since her father had died in the Sacrilegious War and sought her hand in marriage on behalf of their nephew. They presented her with the dowry of twenty camels.

Abū Ṭālib stood up and spoke at the wedding ceremony. He said: "If Muhammad (ﷺ) were weighed with any youth of the Quraish, he would outweigh him in lineage, nobility, virtue and intelligence. If he has little wealth then (let it be known that) wealth is a fleeting shadow and a borrowed thing which must be returned. He desires Khadījah bint Khuwaylid and she has the same feeling for him."

❑ Khadījah's uncle, 'Amr replied: "He is the stallion whose nose cannot be ringed." And the marriage ceremony was concluded.

❑ It is said that this last statement was made by Abū Sufyān when Muhammad (ﷺ) married his daughter Umm Habibah. At that time the war between them was at its fiercest. Abū Sufyān made an excuse for that, saying that Muhammad's (ﷺ) status was such that to become his father-in-law was a great honour! The enmity between them did not detract in anyway from Muhammad's (ﷺ) status, and his marriage with Abū Sufyān's daughter did not disgrace Abū Sufyān at all, even though he was at that time his most ardent enemy!

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) was 25 years old when he married Khadījah and her age was then about 40 years. This marriage lasted until Khadījah died at the age of 65 years. Throughout this time she was the source of honour and respect and she bore all the Prophet's children for him except Ibrāhīm. First she gave birth to Al Qāsim, and this is the *Kunniya* by which he was known in the era of prophethood. Then came Zaynab, Ruqayya, Umm Kulthūm, Fāṭimah and Abdullāh, who is also known as Ṭāhir. Al Qāsim died when he was old enough to ride animals, 'Abdullāh died as a baby, and all daughters of Muhammad (ﷺ) died during his lifetime with the exception of Fāṭimah, who died six months after him. Muhammad's (ﷺ) union with Khadījah was a blessing for both of them, and there is no doubt that, that house was touched by the spirit of its master; the spirit of purification from the filth of *Jahilīyah* and contempt for the worship of idols.

❑ After marriage Muhammad (ﷺ) resumed the life of contemplation and seclusion which he had known before. He kept away from all that in which the Arabs indulged during their boisterous parties such as alcohol, showing off, gambling, rivalry etc. However, this did not prevent him from conducting his trade, earning his living, travelling in the land or walking in the market-places. An intelligent man living among a frivolous group of people is required to exercise great care and consideration, especially if he has the tendency to be softhearted and pleasant.

❑ There was nothing in this successful marriage to raise concern, except the fact that Khadījah was grieved at the death of all her sons in that society where sons were given a high status, and daughters were buried alive and the fathers' faces were dark with anger and gloomy on receiving news of the birth of a daughter. It was strange that the Arabs, after the Prophet's ministry, would jeer him for this and announce expectantly that his progeny would be cut off and he would have none to remember him. Ibn 'Abbās reported that the Quraish pledged

among themselves to persist in disbelief.

They said: 'What we are doing is more lasting than what the amputated *Ṣunbūr* is doing." The *Ṣunbūr* is a date palm whose roots are broken. By this they meant that when he died, Muhammad (ﷺ) would have no progeny to inherit him or carry on his mission.

﴾**Or they say: is he a poet, [one] for whom we may expect the accident of time? Say [them]: "Expect [your fill]! Behold! I am with you among the expectant.**﴿ (Qur'ān 52: 30-31)

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) and his mission were above these petty desires. Nevertheless, as a father, his heart grieved when he lost his sons and the old pains of his orphanhood were revived by this loss. He was able to survive and grow up in spite of his parents dying while he was a baby. Now, however, he was seeing those flowers withering which he and his wife had longed to see in full bloom. It was as if Allāh (ﷻ) wanted sad tenderness to be a part of his being! The men who rule nation adopt haughtiness only when their hearts are nurtured on harshness and egotism, and when they live in happiness without a touch of sadness. On the other hand, those who have experienced pain will be the quickest to sympathize with those who are sad and grief-stricken.

The Ka'bah

The Ka'bah was one of the vestiges of Ibrāhīm's (ﷺ) religion which the Arabs in *jahilīyah* still respected. It resembles a large room built heavy of stones and its ceiling is supported by expensive wooden pillars. It was first erected by the father of prophets, Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), and his son Isma'il (ﷺ). The purpose of building was that, it should be a place for the worship of Allāh (ﷻ) and a mosque in which only His name would be mentioned. Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) underwent a painful struggle to destroy the idols of his people and the temples in which they

were worshipped. Then Allāh (ﷻ) revealed to him that he should build this house to be a pillar and cornerstone of *tawhīd* and a place of refuge and security for everyone. Of course, since not all the pilgrims could fit inside, the land surrounding it was annexed and considered a sanctuary for them.

❑ The implication of this is that the Ka'bah itself is a piece of stone which can neither benefit nor harm. The sanctity which it acquired was on account of the associations and aims which lay behind it. For this reason the Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized that people's honour, wealth and blood were holier in the sight of Allāh (ﷻ) than the Kab'ah and more worthy of respect. To think that the Kab'ah or a piece of it has the power to harm or benefit is idolatry which Islām will oppose till the end of time.

❑ You are well aware that when the rulers, leaders and soldiers salute the flag of their country and struggle for it, they are not in fact worshipping a piece of cloth. It is actually a show of respect and veneration for the deeper meanings that lie behind it. It is easy to understand that the first mosque ever to be built on the face of this earth should have a special historical status and be the *qiblah* (direction faced) of the mosques which were built later. Nevertheless, the real goal of any prayer or show of humility is Allāh (ﷻ) alone. Abū Dharr (ﷺ) said:

"I asked the Prophet (ﷺ) which was the first mosque to be built on the earth?"

He replied: "The Sacred Mosque" (that is, *Al Masjid Al Harām*).

Then I asked: "and what next?"

He said: "the Furthest Mosque" (that is, *Al Masjid Al Aqsa*).

I asked: "How long was it between the two?"

He said: "Forty years, and furthermore, the earth is a mosque for you. So wherever the time for prayers catches you, then offer prayers, for there is virtue in it."[17]

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[17] A sound Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Al Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Al Bayhaqī, Al Tayālisi and Ahmad.

❑ The Ka'bah, being an ancient monument, was exposed to the vicissitudes of time, which weakened its structure and cracked its walls. A few years before the Prophet's (ﷺ) ministry a heavy flood swept through Makkah and the Ka'bah was almost destroyed. The Quraish felt that they must renovate its structure to protect its sanctity. The leaders and great personalities of the Quraish all took part in the renovation. They pulled down the weak portions that remained and erected a new structure in their place.
❑ A structure whose foundations were laid by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) and Ismaīl (ﷺ) in the distant past could not be entrusted to ordinary labourers. So it is not surprising that the leaders and Sheikhs of the tribe should take part in this activity, and among them were Muhammad (ﷺ) and his uncles.
❑ 'Amr ibn Dinār reports that he heard Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (ﷺ) saying:

"When the Ka'bah was being rebuilt the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and 'Abbās went to carry stones.
'Abbās (ﷺ) said to the Prophet (ﷺ): "Lift your *izār* (loin clothe) over your shoulder and it will protect you from the stones. He did so this was before prophethood and he fell to the ground in a faint.

His eyes flashed towards the heavens and he said: "My *izār*! My *izār*!" It was fastened back in place and after that he was never again seen naked."[18]

❑ The clans vied with each other in rebuilding the Kab'ah, each of them wanting to be foremost and gain the prestige from it. This contest almost turned into a bloody war in the holy sanctuary. Enmity spread among the builders when they prepared to replace the black stone in the side of the Kab'ah. Abū Umayyah ibn Al Mughirah of the Makhzūmi clan saved the situation by suggesting that they should settle the matter by asking the first person to enter through the gate of Safā to decide between them. Allāh (ﷻ) willed that Muhammad (ﷺ) should

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[18] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and others.

be that person, and when they saw him they shouted: "Here is Al Amīn (the trustworthy)! We accept him as arbitrator!"

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) called for a cloth and he placed the black stone in the middle of it. Then he called the heads of the disputing clans and all of them held on to an edge of the cloth. They lifted it and took it to the Ka'bah and Muhammad (ﷺ) himself put it in its rightful place.[19]

This was the solution offered by someone endowed with sound judgement, at whose sight the people were filled with optimism and ease and whom they willingly accepted as arbitrator. This shows the high status which he had attained in their eyes.

❑ In spite of the effort made by the Quraish to rebuild the Ka'bah, they fell short of the foundations laid by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ). Nevertheless, after the Prophet (ﷺ) had gained supremacy in the Arabian peninsula he did not see any need to adjust the building but chose to leave it as it was.

'Ā'ishah 'May Allāh be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) told her:

"Don't you see that when your people built the Kab'ah they fell short of the foundations laid by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ)?"

She Said: Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), will you not have it extended to the foundations of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ)?"

He said: "If it were not for the fact that your people were recently unbelievers, I should have done so."

Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) said: "If 'Ā'ishah 'May Allāh be pleased with her, heard this from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), then I do not think that he ignored greeting the two corners next to the black stone except for the reason that they were not completed on the foundations of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ)."

❑ The scholars say that the Prophet's (ﷺ) statement mentioned

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[19] A good Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad. It would have been better for the author to quote the text of the Ḥadīth itself rather than use the words of the book of *sīrah*, which have no support.

above meant that the people had just come out of *jahilīyah* and faith had not yet taken a complete hold of them, which made the Arabs averse to demolishing the Ka'bah and redesigning it. If it was compulsory to rebuild the Ka'bah as Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) had built it, the Prophet (ﷺ) would never have left it as it was. Nevertheless, the matter was not so important as to provoke complications.

Seekers of truth

We have said that paganism adorns its falsehood with veneer of truth to make it easy for people to swallow its bitterness. It claims to believe in a God who created the heavens and earth but at the same time it associates with Him other gods who are the means and intermediaries to approach Him. Now, since the creation of the heavens and the earth was far removed from our sight, the stubborn idolaters take comfort in the gods, that are close at hand. They visit them day and night until their relationship with these gods becomes much stronger than their relationship with the True God, and mention of Him to Whom they appeal through the agency of others is made only when arguing or apologizing.

﴾And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: Allah why then do they turn away? And he said "my *Rabb*! Look Those are people who do not believe." Then bear with them [Muhammad] and say: Peace! But they will come to know.﴿ (Qur'ān 43: 87-89)

❑ Persistence in such nonsense, however, went beyond its limits and the masses became totally absorbed in what they had inherited. They lost the blessing of a free mind even a perceptive mind and lived in praise of that of which they had no knowledge. As for those who were endowed with the ability to think, their thinking collided with the boundaries of their inclinations and desires, and maybe they concealed what they knew or even fought it. Only a few people dared to oppose the

traditions which had taken root in society and voice the truth, and even fewer lived for it or sacrificed themselves on its behalf.

❑ Before the Prophet's ministry there were those who looked at the paganism of the Arabs with scorn, and those who knew that their people were indulging in superstitious beliefs but could not find the means to prevent them. Bukhārī[20] narrated from Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, He met Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl in lower Baldah before he became a prophet and offered him some food containing meat. Zayd (ﷺ) refused to eat it. Saying:

"I do not eat from what you sacrifice on your altars;[21]

I eat only that one on which Allāh's (ﷻ) name has been mentioned." He used to condemn the way, the Quraish slaughtered their animals by saying: "The sheep was created by Allāh (ﷻ) and it is He who caused the water to descend for it from the sky and who caused the pasture to grow for it from the earth. But you slaughter in someone's name other than Allāh's!

❑ In another narration it is said of Zayd ibn 'Amr (ﷺ)that he went to Syria and asked about religion in order to follow it.

He met a Jewish scholar and asked him about his religion, saying: "Perhaps I'll follow your religion!"

The Jew said "You will not follow our religion unless you take your share of God's anger."

Zayd (ﷺ) said: "I am fleeing only from God's anger, and I shall not bear any of God's anger at all while I am able. Will you show me something else?"

The Jew said: "I know of nothing else except that you should be a *Ḥanīf*."

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[20] Also narrated by Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ). The Ḥadīth comes from another source too with an addition that contradicts the author's explanation below. This addition is not authentic, however.

[21] Zayd (ﷺ) thought that the meat offered to him was of the kind prohibited by Allāh (ﷻ). Nevertheless, it is certain that the Prophet's (ﷺ) house never ate the sacrifices made to idols. Zayd (ﷺ) wanted to be sure of himself and so declared his religion. The Prophet (ﷺ) remembered this and was pleased with it.

Zayd (رضي الله عنه) said: "And what is a *Ḥanīf*?

The Jew replied: "Abraham's (عليه السلام) religion. He was neither a Jew nor a Christian and he worshipped none beside God."

❑ Zayd (رضي الله عنه) left and he met a Christian scholar and asked him the same.

The Christian replied: "You will not follow our religion unless you take your share of God's curse."

Zayd (رضي الله عنه) said: "I shall always flee from God's curse while I am able, so will you show me something else?

The Christian replied: "I know of nothing else except that you should be a Ḥanīf."

Zaid (رضي الله عنه) asked: "And what is a Ḥanīf?"

The Christian replied: "Abraham's (عليه السلام) religion. He was neither a Jew nor a Christian and he worshipped none beside God."

❑ When Zayd (رضي الله عنه) heard this about Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام), he left, and when he was outside he raised his hands and said: "O God, I call You to witness that I have adopted the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (عليه السلام)."

❑ These narrations show the great amount of confusion which had spread throughout the world and observed the prevailing religions. The Jews felt that they were being persecuted in the land and were rejected in every region, and so anyone who accepted their religion had to bear the burden of God's anger against them. The Christians disputed among themselves the nature of Christ and his mother's relationship to the Supreme God. These disputes led them into violent wars among themselves and divided them into sects, each of them cursing the others. The Christians of Syria whom Zayd (رضي الله عنه) asked were the Jacobites and they differed with the official creed of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus it was not strange that they should inform Zayd (رضي الله عنه) of the curses that would be heaped upon him if he entered their religion. Or perhaps this curse was the consequence of the sin committed by Ādam (عليه السلام) and passed on

to all his progeny, as claimed by the Christians, who justify Jesus's crucifixion because of this. It was Zayd's (ﷺ) right to abandon all of them and return to the religion of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) to look for his roots.

❑ Bukhārī narrates from Asmā' bint Abū Bakr (ﷺ):

"I saw Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl (ﷺ) standing with his back leaning against the Ka'bah and he was saying: "O assembly of Quraish, by God, none of you is following the religion of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) but myself." He used to rescue the buried baby girls and say to their fathers when they wanted to kill their baby daughters: "I shall take care of her for you." He would take the girl and when she was big enough he would say to her father: 'If you wish I shall give her back to you, or if not, I shall continue bringing her up.[22]

❑ Zayd (ﷺ) was one of those rare thinkers who despised the wrongs of *jahilīyah*, were thankful for their ability to see the truth and did not underestimate their value in their society. Fate, however, had selected a man who perceived the truth and possessed the ability to disseminate it throughout all parts of the globe in spite of the efforts to preserve falsehood at the cost of lives and possessions. Fate was in the process of preparing that towering personality to fulfil this tremendous role, and great tasks are equalled only by great personalities.

In the Cave of Ḥirā

Muhammad (ﷺ) was nearing his forties. His previous dedication to contemplation had widened the mental gulf between himself and his people. His opinion of them had come to resemble the opinion of scientist of a modern world towards those who believe that the earth is balanced on the horns of a bull, or that of an atomicist towards those who pelt one another with stones when they fight and travel on horseback.

[22] A sound Ḥadīth.

❑ That was as far as the mental side was concerned. As for the spiritual side, scepticism had spread among the people of *jahilīyah* and it caused them to swear their utmost by God that He would not resurrect the dead. This deep-rooted and obtrusive scepticism had caused the best people to be confused and question the fate of this world. If existence was firstly and lastly of this fleeting life span on earth then extinction was far better! Was there no glimpse of light in this pervading darkness?

❑ Every year Muhammad (ﷺ) used to leave Makkah to spend the month of Ramaḍān in the cave of Ḥirā, situated a few miles from the population in the heart of one of the hills overlooking the city, and which was free from the people's vanities and aimless talk. In this secluded mountain Muhammad (ﷺ) took provisions to last those long nights. There he would detach himself from the world and turn towards the Lord of the World with his eager heart. From that covered cave a lone soul could look down upon the world which was heaving with troubles, rivalries and disappointments. Then it would withdraw into itself, full of sorrow and helplessness because it did not know of any way out of all that nor did it know of any cure! In that far-off cave a penetrating eye observed the legacy of the previous prophets sent by Allāh (ﷻ) and found it to be like a deep mine from which the precious metal could be extracted only by tremendous effort, and even then the ore would be mixed with the earth and no human being could separate them.

❑ In the cave of Ḥirā Muhammad (ﷺ) used to meditate and worship; his heart shone; his soul was purified; he approached the truth with all his energy and kept away from falsehood as much as he could. Finally he reached such a high state of purity that the rays of the Unseen began to reflect from his heart. There was no dream that he saw without it being realized like the dawn of the morn. In this cave Muhammad (ﷺ) met with the heavenly hosts.

❑ Before him the desert had witnessed a brother of his who came in flight from Egypt, and traversed the dry, barren lands, seeking peace, security and guidance for himself and his people. He was attracted by the sight of a burning bush on the right hand side of the valley, and when he went toward it, his hearing and senses were filled with the holy call:

﴾Behold! I, even I, am Allah. There is no God save me. So worship Me and establish worship for My remembrance.﴿ (Qur'ān 20: 14)

❑ One flame of this fire reached across the centuries to flare up once more in the depths of the cave wherein was a man devoted to worship and self-purification, who kept his body and soul away from the filth and evils of *jahilīyah*. However, this flame was not a fire to attract the onlooker: it was a light which shone with inspiration and guidance on the startled heart and brought stability and consolation to it. Muhammed (ﷺ) listened in amazement to the voice of the angel telling him: "Read."
❑ He replied in wonder: "I cannot read."
❑ The question and reply were repeated and thereafter flowed the first āyāt (verses) of the noble Qur'ān:

﴾Read: In the name of your Lord Who creates, Creates man from a clot. Read: and your *Rabb* is the Most Bounteous, Who teaches by the pen, Teaches man that which he knew not."﴿ (Qur'ān 96: 1-5)[23]

Waraqah ibn Naufal

Muhammad (ﷺ) was a human being like ourselves. However creation does not know such great disparity among the members of a single species as that existing among the mankind: some of them are higher than the resplendent stars whereas others are not worth the droppings of a goat. Nevertheless, all of them are human beings. This disparity occurs among people who have not had the support of revelation, so when a human

[23] An authentic Ḥadīth.

being has been selected, he is enlightened with the rays of divine guidance and support, what will he be like?

﴾He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His command whom He will of His servants [saying]: warn mankind that there is no god save Me, so fulfil your duty to me.﴿ (Qur'ān 16: 2)

❑ When the soul is breathed into the embryo Allāh (ﷻ) makes him a new creation different from what he was in his first six stages of being: a type of mud, then a sperm, then a clot, then a morsel of flesh, then bones, then a body clothed in flesh. Similarly, when the Prophets receive revelation and its new spirit runs in them, they become new human beings and no-one is able to match them at all in excellence and enlightenment.

❑ This crucial change is the reason for Allāh's reminding Muhammad (ﷺ) of the Power which created man from a clot: The power which created this wonderful human being from a parasital clot will, by Allāh's Bounty, make Muhammad (ﷺ) a human prophet, able to read after his illiteracy.

﴾And thus have We inspired in you [Muhammad] a spirit of Our command. You did not know what the Scripture was, nor what the faith was. But We have made it a light with which We guide whom We wish of Our servants. And behold indeed you guide a right path. The path of Allah, Whom belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth.﴿ (Qur'ān 42: 52-53)

❑ It was as if the previous forty years were only a day, and the morning of the next day began the Revelation. That searching, yearning mind could now expect the light of truth, and that troubled heart could now feel the coolness of certainty and the expanse of hope. That far-reaching change had occurred it was prophethood! How wonderful was the coming blessing and how great were the anxieties Muhammad (ﷺ) would have to face on its behalf.

❑ Thus he quickly regained his composure, and his wife's reaction to it was one of the noblest reactions to come from a

woman past or present. She soothed him when he was perturbed, she made him rest when he was exhausted and she reminded him of the virtues of his character, emphasizing that righteous people like himself could never be humiliated, and that when Allāh (ﷻ) moulded a man with the most excellent traits of character it was to bestow honour and kindness on him. With this well-balanced opinion and purity of heart, Khadījah deserved the salutations sent to her by the Lord of the Worlds through the Faithful Spirit [Angel Jibrīl (ﷺ)].[24]

[24] The author is referring to an authentic Ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ), in which he said:

"Jibrīl (ﷺ) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: " O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), here is Khadījah coming with a pot of soup or food or drink. When she reaches you, convey *salām* to her from her Lord and from myself, and give her the good tidings of a home in Paradise made of jewel, in which there shall be no Clamour or fatigue.

Chapter Three

The Mission's Struggle

The dark clouds of confusion dispersed and the scenes of reality took shape. Muhammad (ﷺ) knew with certainty that he had become a Prophet of Allāh (ﷻ), The High Exalted, and that it was the ambassador of Revelation who came to him with news from the heavens. The awe of contact between angel and man, however, had left its mark of exhaustion in his being as if he had undertaken a strenuous task. This is not surprising, since he remained for a long time feeling the effects of the Revelation. Allāh (ﷻ) wished the Revelation to cease after its commencement, as we have described above, so that the Prophet's (ﷺ) eagerness and expectancy for it would again provide him with the strength and stability to bear it when it returned. In spite of that, however, the human capacity was tested by its pressure. Jibrīl (ﷺ) came for the second time.

❑ Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (ﷺ) reported that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) speaking about the cessation of Revelation and saying:

"While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky, so I looked up. There was the angel who had come to me in Ḥira, and he was seated on a throne between the earth and the sky. I was so terrified of him that I fell to the ground. Then I went back to my family and said, Cover me up! And they wrapped me up in a blanket. Then Allāh (ﷻ) Revealed:

﴾O you enveloped in your cloak, Arise and warn! Your *Rabb* magnify, Your raiment purify, Pollution shun!﴿ (Qur'ān 74: 1-5)[1]

❑ These decisive, successive orders heralded for the Prophet (ﷺ) the end of the past with its dreams, peace and quiet, and that he was now on the threshold of a new occupation which required wakefulness and determination, warning and acquittal.

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[1] Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

Let him therefore bear the message, let him guide the people, and seek support in the Revelation, for it is the source of his message and the reinforcement of his call.

❑ Revelation is the inspiration of the heart with what Allāh (ﷻ) wants in a clear manner which contains no possibility of doubt. It takes various forms, some of which are easier than others. 'Umar (ﷺ) is reported to have said: Whenever Revelation descended on the Prophet (ﷺ), a sound like the buzzing of bees was heard near his face.[2] Sometime it would come like the ringing of a bell, and this was the hardest form for him. The angel would come upon him in such a way that his forehead would sweat profusely on a cold, wintry day,[3] and his mount would lie down on the ground if he was riding it.[4] Once Revelation came to him while his thigh was resting on the thigh of Zayd ibn Thābit (ﷺ), and it became so heavy that Zayd's (ﷺ) thigh almost broke.[5] At other times it might come more easily and lightly than that.

❑ One might ask why did the first Revelations come with such intensity and why did the Qur'ān not begin to be Revealed as inspiration in a dream or inspiration in wakefulness as the incident described by the Prophet (ﷺ):

"The Holy Spirit Jibrīl (ﷺ) inspired my heart with the fact that no soul shall die until it has exhausted its sustenance; so fear Allāh (ﷻ) and be restrained in seeking.[6] Is this not less likely to cause fright and exhaustion?"

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[2] A weak Ḥadīth, narrated by Al Tirmidhī, who mentioned that there was some dispute about its chain. The chain has Yūnus ibn Sālim in it, and from him 'Abdul Razzaq, narrated it. But Yūnus is not known. 'Abdul Razzaq was asked about him, and he said: "I don't think he is anything."

[3] This is the meaning of the Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

[4] This is the meaning of the Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Ḥākim on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

[5] This is the meaning of the Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit (ﷺ).

[6] A sound Ḥadīth coming from different sources, each strengthening the other.

❑ The answer is that the Qur'ān first began to be Revealed in this manner,[7] so that there might be no doubt that the words and the meaning were from Allāh (ﷻ) and that Muhammad (ﷺ) was entrusted with it after having been singled out for it. Thus it is not the fabrication of a recluse who had certain visions, nor the invention of a philosopher who excelled in logic and beautiful speeches; it is the word of Allāh (ﷻ) who is Absolute Truth.

﴾It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired, Which one of mighty powers has taught him, One vigorous; and he grew clear to view, When he was on the uppermost horizon, Then he drew close and came down, Till he was [distant] two bows' length or even nearer, And He revealed to His servant that which he revealed. The heart did not lie [in seeing] what it saw. Will you then dispute with him concerning what he sees?﴿ (Qur'ān 53: 4-12)

What is the call?

Muhammad (ﷺ) began telling the people about Islām and urging them to join the religion with which Allāh (ﷻ) had sent him. The Sūrahs of the Qur'ān which were revealed at Makkah explain the beliefs and actions which Allāh (ﷻ) charged His servants to uphold, and he commissioned the Prophet (ﷺ) to establish and nurture them. The most important are:

1. Absolute Unity. Humans are not servants to any being on earth or in heaven because all in the heavens and the earth are servants to Allāh (ﷻ): they submit to His Majesty and obey His Command. There are no partners with Him, nor intercessors, nor intermediaries. It is every person's right to approach Allāh (ﷻ) directly without going through any other creation, whether big or small. It is every person's duty to denounce those who establish themselves or others as intermediaries and bring them down to their rightful position, whether they happen to be

[7] Communication of the physical body with the unseen world is strenuous for human nature. It may be compared to what the mediums experience during hypnosis, though there is a great difference.

human or stone or anything else. All individual and collective links ought to be built on the basis that Allāh (ﷻ) is Supreme in His Kingdom with this Perfect Oneness.

❑ The consequences of this belief were that the stones which the Arabs worshipped became no better than the stones with which they used to build their houses or pave the roads, and that the human beings who were deified in other religions were given their rightful status. It was made plain that they were servants to the One who created and fed them, that they would progress or regress only if they obeyed or disobeyed Him, and that they had no say in creation or the provision of sustenance.

2. The Hereafter:

The day will inevitably come when people will have to face their Lord and be questioned on every minute detail of their previous life.

﴾And whoever does an atom's weight of evil, will see it then.﴿ (Qur'ān 99: 7-8)

Thereafter will be either eternal bliss for the good people to enjoy or dreadful punishment in which the evil-doers will remain miserable.

❑ Considering the Hereafter in every action that one performs or avoids is an established principle of behaviour in Islām. Just as passengers on a train know that they will get off at the next stop, likewise Muslims know that time will inevitably take them back to their Creator where they shall harvest the fruits of what they have planted in this life.

3. Purification of the Self: This is done by adhering to the prescribed acts of worship and keeping away from other actions in order to avoid their evil consequences.

﴾Say: "Come, I shall recite to you that which your *Rabb* has made a sacred duty for you: that you ascribe nothing as partner to Him; that

you do good to parents; that you do not kill your children because of penury. We provide for you and for them and that you avoid indecency whether open or concealed. And that you do not destroy the life which Allāh has made sacred, save in the course of justice. This He has commanded you, in order that you may discern. And do not touch the wealth of the orphan, except to improve it, till he reaches maturity. Give full measure and full weight in justice. We do not test any soul beyond its capacity. And if you give your word, do justice to it, even though it may be [against] a kinsman; and fulfil the Covenant of Allāh. This He commands you so that perhaps you may remember.》 (Qur'ān 6: 151-152)

❑ And He (ﷻ) commands you, saying:

《This is My straight path, so follow it. Do not follow other ways, lest you be parted from His Way. This He has ordained for you, that you may ward off [evil]."》 (Qur'ān 6: 153)

❑ Aktam ibn Sayfī said: "Surely what the Prophet (ﷺ) brought, if it did not become a full fledged religion, it would have been good moral teachings for the people."

4. Protection of the well-being of the Muslim community.

The Muslim community must be considered to be a solid unit based on brotherhood and co-operation. This demands that the wronged should be championed, the deprived should be assisted and the weak should be strengthened. In Sūrah (Chapter) 74, which is the first Sūrah in which the Prophet (ﷺ) was ordered to preach openly, we read these āyāt (verses):

《Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds; Save those who will stand on the right hand, In gardens they will ask one another, Concerning the guilty: What has brought you to this burning? They will answer: we were not of those who prayed; Nor did we feed the wretched; We used to take part [in vain dispute] with [all] the disputes, And we used to deny the Day of Judgement, Till the

Inevitable came to us. The mediation of no mediators will avail them then.》 (Qur'ān 74: 38-48)

Whenever Abū Bakr (ﷺ) saw any of the weak and oppressed Muslims being tortured, he would spend all his energy and wealth to free him. This is the individual's right over society.

The First Group

The propagation of Islām began to increase in Makkah. It took effect in those broad-minded individuals, who quickly abandoned their former *Jahilīyah* and secretly embraced the new faith. The āyāt (verses) of the Qur'ān descended on the hearts of those who had accepted the seeds of faith as rain descends on fertile soil:

《When We send down water on it, it thrills and swells and put forth every single kind [of growth].》 (Qur'ān 22: 5)

❑ The believers in this ideology gathered around their leader with determination, and in love and admiration they listened to him explaining the principles of their ideology. Faith is a magical force: once it has taken root in someone's heart it can make the impossible possible. We have seen old men and youths meeting over a particular thought and giving it the position of firm faith in their hearts. Although it is only a materialistic thought, it makes their lives the fuel for its spreading and it urges them to bear the worst kinds of suffering on its behalf.
❑ In the prisons now are men who graduated from the universities of the West. They spend a large part of their lives with murderers and drug traffickers. This is because they see it as part of the necessary effort they must make to achieve success for their principles. How much more effective it would have been if the faith which appeared at that time was faith in Allāh (ﷻ), Lord of all the worlds, and faith in the Hereafter, where people encounter their Lord after they leave this world, and where they find lush gardens and exquisite palaces under which rivers flow? The first group was in the process of formation and

it was increasing daily.

❑ It was natural that the Prophet (ﷺ) should present Islām first to those who were closest to him among his household and friends. These people had never had any doubts about the greatness of Muhammad (ﷺ) or his truthfulness, so it is no wonder, therefore, that they were the first to support and follow him. His wife, Khadījah, believed in him and so did his slave freed, Zayd ibn Hārithah, and his cousin, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who was a young boy living under the care of the Prophet (ﷺ). His bosom friend, Abū Bakr (ﷺ), also accepted Islām and was very active in propagating it and he persuaded those whom he loved and trusted to accept it too. These were 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (ﷺ), Ṭalha ibn 'Ubaidullāh and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas. The Christian scholar, Waraqah ibn Naufal, also believed in him, and it is reported,[8] that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw him in a dream after his death in a state of bliss, which meant that he had found favour with Allāh (ﷻ). Al Zubayr ibn al 'Awwām, Abū Dharr al Ghifāri, Umar ibn 'Anbasa and Sa'īd ibn al 'As accepted Islām, and Islām spread in Makkah among those whose hearts Allāh (ﷻ) enlightened. The propagation of Islām going on in secret without any open show of zealousness or provocation.

❑ The news filtered down to the Quraish, although they paid no attention to it. Perhaps they thought that Muhammad (ﷺ) was one of those religious fanatics who would speak of Divinity and its rights as Umayyah ibn Al Ṣalt used to do, or the Christian scholar Ibn Sa'idah or 'Amr ibn Nufayl and others like them. Nevertheless, their fear grew when his fame started to spread and so they began to observe him and his call. The secret propagation of the *Da'wah* continued for three years, then the order was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) to announce it to his people and openly confront their falsehood and denounce their idols.

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[8] This is a good Ḥadīth, and the words "it is reported" are not appropriate since they suggest that it is not authentic. The Ḥadīth comes from two sources, both of which have been authenticated by Ibn Kathīr. It is also strengthened by the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying: "Do not curse Waraqah for I dreamt of a garden or two belonging to him."

Announcement of the Call

Ibn 'Abbās said that when the āyah (verse) "And warn your tribe of close relatives" (Qur'ān 26: 214), was revealed the Prophet (ﷺ) climbed the hill of *Safā* and started shouting: "O Banū Fihr, O Banū 'Adī," calling all the clans of the Quraish to assemble, and those who could not come out sent a messenger to see what had happened.
When they all had assembled the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"What would you say if I told you that there was an army of horsemen in the valley wanting to attack you, would you believe me?"
They said: "We have never heard you tell a lie."
He said: "Well, I am warning you of terrible punishment!"
Abū Lahab then shouted: "May you be in misery all day long! Is this what you called us for? Then Allāh (ﷻ) revealed Sūrat *ul Lahab* (Chapter).[9]

❑ According to Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), when this āyah was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up and said:

"O assembly of Quraish! Purchase your own (freedom), I shall not avail you in any way before Allāh (ﷻ); O Banu 'Abdul Muttalib, I will not avail you in any way before Allāh (ﷻ); O "Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muttalib, I will not avail you in any way before Allāh (ﷻ); O Safiyyah, aunt of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), I will not avail you in any way before Allāh (ﷻ)."[10]

This loud call was the final degree of communication. The Prophet (ﷺ) severed relations with his people on account of his call. He explained to those who were closest to himself that belief in this message is what would keep alive the relationship between him and them and that the blood kinship which the

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[9] A Sound Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

[10] A sound Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim with two chains of narrators through Abū Hurairah (ﷺ).

Arabs upheld had melted in the heat of this warning coming from Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) had enjoyed a high status in his town and was the object of confidence and love. Nevertheless, here he was confronting Makkah with what it disliked and exposing himself to opposition from the foolish people and the men of high rank. The first group whose affection he risked losing was his nearest of kin, although such pain was insignificant compared with the truth with which Allāh (ﷻ) had enlightened his heart. It was not for him, therefore, to find rest at night while Makkah was shaking with astonishment and condemnation, and was preparing to put an end to this revolution which had suddenly descended upon it and was about to sweep away its custom and inherited traditions.

❑ The Quraish continued moving along their path: the path of obstinacy and avoidance of truth. Likewise Muhammad (ﷺ) continued moving along his path, calling them to Allāh (ﷻ), being gentle in his presentation of Islām, exposing the disgraces of paganism, listening and answering, attacking and defending. His keenness to bring guidance to his close relative, however, spurred him on to have another try at presenting Islām to them. Winning them over would have far-reaching benefits since they held a position of honour among the Arabs. Moreover, they were his close relatives for whom he wished good and whom he hated to have Allāh's anger descend.

❑ Ibn Athīr reports that Ja'fār ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Abil Ḥakam said that when the *āyāh* "and warn thy tribe of near kindred" was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) became very worried and sat at home like a sick man.

His aunts came to visit him and he said to them: "I do not have any complaint of sickness. However, Allāh (ﷻ) ordered me to warn my close relatives."

❑ They said, "Well, call them, but do not invite Abū Lahab, for he will not respond to you."

❑ He called them together and they all came, and along with

them came some from the clan of the Banu Muṭṭalib ibn 'Abd Manāf. They totalled forty-five men. Abū Lahab was the first to speak He said: "Here are your uncles and cousins, so speak and do not act childishly, and know that your people do not have any power against the entire Arab nation, and I am the most fitting person to stop you. So let your father's children be enough for you, and if you remain steadfast in what you are doing, then it is easier for them than to have the clans of the Quraish ambush with the help of the Arabs. I have never seen any man bringing so much evil on his father's children as you have brought.[11]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) kept quiet and did not speak in that gathering. Then he called them on another occasion and said: "Praise be to Allāh (ﷻ): I praise Him and seek His help, and I believe in Him and place my Trust in Him. And I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ), Who is Alone and has no partner." Then he continued, "A leader does not lie to his family. By Allāh (ﷻ), besides Whom there is no other god, I am Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) to you in particular and to the mankind in general. By Allāh (ﷻ), you shall die even as you fall asleep; you shall be resurrected even as you wake up; you shall be called to account for what you are doing; and then it will be paradise forever or hell forever."

❑ Abū Ṭālib said: "How we would love to assist you! And how eager we are for your advice! And how sincerely we believe in what you have said! Here is your clan gathered together and I am one of them. However, I am the quickest of them to accept what you say, so proceed to execute the orders that come to you from Allāh (ﷻ), I shall continue to protect you although my heart will not bear to part from the religion of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib."

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[11] I did not find this narrator in the list of narrators. There is Ja'far ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥakam, who is a Tabi'i of the tribe of Dus. He narrated from Anas (ﷺ) and the Tabi'in. if he is this person, then the chain is *mursal* and therefore weak. I did not encounter this ascription being made to him. However, if it is someone else, then I have no knowledge of him.

❑ Then Abū Lahab said: "This, by Allāh (ﷻ), is a disgrace! Take hold of his hands before others take hold of you!"
❑ Abū Ṭālib replied: "By Allāh (ﷻ), we shall protect him as long as we live."

Abū Ṭālib

In spite of remaining in idolatry and holding fast to the religion of his forefathers, Abū Ṭālib's affection for his nephew did not change. He clearly understood the hardships which this call would bring himself and his family. Nevertheless, his consideration for Muhammad (ﷺ) and dislike of hurting his feelings led him to assure the Prophet (ﷺ) of complete freedom of action. In fact, Abū Ṭālib undertook to protect him while he was conveying the message of his Lord! Abū Ṭālib was one of the few great men of Makkah. He was respected in his family and among the people, and no-one dared to defy his authority. His remaining with the people of Makkah in the worship of their gods was a good reason for his influence to spread and his rights to be upheld.
❑ On the other hand, Abū Lahab was the example of those family heads who bent over backwards to protect their own interests and prestige without any regard for right or wrong. Any action which exposed his interests to destruction or marred his status would rouse his anger and impel to do something foolish. In Abū Lahab's nature was a streak of harshness which led him into self behaviour. His sons 'Utbah and Utaybah, were married to the Prophet's (ﷺ) daughters, Ruqaiyyah and Umm Kulthum. So he ordered his sons to divorce them which they did. Perhaps Abū Lahab was influenced in his violent hatred for Muhammad (ﷺ) by his wife, Umm Jamīl, daughter of Harb and sister of Abū Sufyān. She was a domineering woman, incited into hatred for the Prophet (ﷺ) and his religion by a variety of reasons. So she let her loose tongue spread innumerable slanders against him.
❑ If the passions of *jahilīyah* could incite Muhammad's (ﷺ) uncle to act so selfishly and harshly towards him, what would be

the behaviour of those who were not related to him and who would like to see every upright person stumble and every innocent sentenced? Nevertheless, what was Abū Lahab, what were the Quraish and the Arabs, what was the entire world worth compared with a man who bore a message from Allāh (ﷻ). Sovereign of the heavens and the earth, who wanted restore rationality to a world which had lost its reason and erase superstition from a people suffocated by it like a sandstorm? What could be the effect of the attitude of an ignoramus, or the indignation of a haughty man? Could they stop this great message from proceeding towards its distant goal?

❑ Floating seaweed cannot stop an ocean liner. If the people of *jahilīyah* were angry with the Muslims for abandoning their people for this call to the extent that they called them apostates, then the Muslims were even more angry with them because they made fools of themselves and disgraced their intellects: they stuck stubbornly to superstitious beliefs for which had no authorization from Allāh (ﷻ). The call which Muhammad (ﷺ) started in Makkah was not for the building of a small nation. It was a complete renaissance for nations and generations which would continue to inherit the truth and spread it in all corners of the globe until the story of life and living things ended on this earth.

❑ What, then, could the enmity of an individual or a tribe do to message which had this role to play in its present and future? And who were those enemies? Prejudiced people with closed minds and whose pride and power told them to strike violently at anyone who opposed them.

﴾And when Our Revelations are recited to them, you know the denial in the faces of those who disbelieve; they all but attack those who recite Our Revelations to them.﴿ (Qur'ān 22: 72)

Or those in ease and luxury who were in love with falsehood because it came to them comfortably couched, and who disliked truth because it was devoid of embellishments:

﴾And when Our clear Revelations are recited unto them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: which of the two parties [yours or ours] is better in position, and more imposing then any army?﴿ (Qur'ān 19: 73)

Or obstinate people who believed that Allāh's guidance was the joke of youngsters or the fashions of a pretty girl so that they could say, leave this and bring that!

﴾And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them, they who do not look for the meeting with Us say: Bring a lecture [Qur'ān] other than this or change it.﴿ (Qur'ān 10: 15)

Or fools who tried to outdo one another in making the loudest noise when the Revelations were being recited so that they might not be heard and understood and so influence pure and healthy hearts and minds:

﴾Those who disbelieve say: do not heed this Qur'an and drown its recitation; perhaps you will be victorious.﴿ (Qur'ān 41: 26)

❑ If the people Makkah had hesitated in accepting Muhammad (ﷺ) until they could study the matter and scrutinize his message weighing it carefully with what they possessed, no intelligent person could have done better than they. Instead, however, they fled from Islām as a criminal flees from the courtroom after his crimes have been exposed and his guilt proved.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was grieved by this rejection coupled with disbelief and provocation, and it is the right of any noble, truthful man to feel sadness and pain when he finds himself disbelieved and shun. However, Allāh (ﷻ) consoled him and showed him the real nature of those who disbelieved and joined forces against him:

﴾We know well how their talk grieves you, though in truth they do not deny you [Muhammad], but evil-doers flout the Revelations of Allāh.﴿ (Qur'ān 6: 33)

❑ Thus Muhammad (ﷺ) had to continue preaching and overcoming all the obstacles that were placed in his way, and those who believed in his Message had to be firm and steadfast. Their steadfastness was not to be in their own interests alone, nor even in fulfilment of the duties of faith, but also in the interests of the future generations. A skyscraper does not rest on the surface of the earth but on foundations which go deep into the earth, and these bear its weight and pillars. The early Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) with their strength of conviction and sincere loyalty were the pillars of his call and the roots which extended in later days in all directions of the globe.

Persecution

The idolaters decided that they would spare no efforts to fight Islām and persecute those who entered it. Ever since the Prophet (ﷺ) had proclaimed his mission openly and condemned his people's deviation, which they had inherited from their forefather, Makkah erupted in a storm of anger. For years it remained like that, regarding the Muslims as outlaws and rebels. The earth shook under their feet and the security of the holy sanctuary was violated with the spilling of their blood and the looting of their wealth and honour. No-one in their position could expect anything but oppression and persecution.

❑ This atmosphere filled with hatred was accompanied by a war of ridicule and humiliation, the intent behind it being to demoralize the Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions were accused and abused, and a group was formed to carry out these campaigns against Islām and its followers. It is a similar strategy to that used by the newspapers when they publish satirical reports about their rivals and amusing pictures to lower the public confidence in them. With this two-pronged attack the Muslims were caught in a tight spot their Prophet was being accused of madness:

﴾And they say: O you whom the Reminder is revealed, Look! You are indeed a madman.﴿ (Qur'ān 15: 6)

And accused of indulging in magic and telling lies:

﴾And they marvel that a warner from among themselves has come them, and the disbelievers say: this is a wizard, a charlatan.﴿ (Qur'ān 38: 4)

This spreads and he is met with hostile stares and feelings of rage:

﴾And Behold! Those who disbelieve would like to upset you with their stares when they hear the Reminder, and they say: Look! he is indeed mad.﴿ (Qur'ān 68: 51)

❑ The lot of the Muslims was no better than this sort of treatment. Morning and evening they were the objects of amusement and derision:

﴾Behold! The guilty used to laugh at those who believed, And wink one to another when they passed them; And when they returned to their own folk, they returned jesting; And when they saw them, they said: "Behold! These have gone astray." Yet they were not sent as guardians over them.﴿ (Qur'ān 83: 29-33)

This war turned into torture and bloodshed as far as the weak and oppressed believers were concerned. Those of them who had no clan to defend them could not be saved from humiliation and murder by anything. They were held and tortured painfully until they disbelieved, died or became unconscious.

'Ammār ibn Yāsir (ﷺ)

Among them was 'Ammār ibn Yāsir, who was one of the earliest converts to Islām. He was a freed-slave of the Banū Makhzūm. He, his father and his mother accepted Islām, and they were dragged by the idolaters into the hot sands of Makkah in the blazing midday heat and there they were tortured.

One day the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by them in this state and he said: "Patience, family of Yāsir, for your rendez-vous is Paradise.[12] Yāsir died of the torture. His wife, Sumayyah, shouted curses at Abū Jahl; he stuck a spear into her heart and she died. She was the first female in Islām to be martyred.

They redoubled their torturing of 'Ammār, sometimes by heat and at other times by placing a stone on his chest or by ducking him underwater and saying: "We shall not let you go until you curse Muhammad (ﷺ) or say something good about Al Lāt and Al Uzza. Eventually he did so and they let him go. He came to the Prophet (ﷺ), weeping, and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him what was the matter. He replied by explaining what had happened.

❑ Then the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "How do you find your heart?"
❑ He replied: " I find it content with faith."
❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) then advised him: "O Ammār, if they do it again then do the same as before." Thereafter Allāh (ﷻ) revealed:

﴾**Save him who is forced into it and whose heart is still content with faith.**﴿ (Qur'ān 16: 106)[13]

'Ammār was one of those who accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) on all his expeditions.

Bilāl (رضي الله عنه)

Among them also was Bilāl ibn Rabah, whose master, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, would force him to lie on his back, then on his stomach on the scorching sands during the midday heat of Makkah.

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[12] A good and sound Hadīth. It is narrated from various authentic sources, which strengthen one another.

[13] There is some doubt about the authenticity of this narration, since the name of the *Sahabī* who heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) is not mentioned (i.e. it is a mursal Hadīth). There is no doubt though, that the *āyāh* (verse) of the Qur'ān was revealed about 'Ammār (رضي الله عنه), for this is corroborated by various sources. However, Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

He would order a huge stone to be placed on his chest and say: "You will remain like this until you die or disbelieve in Muhammad (ﷺ) and worship Al-Lāt and Al-Uzza."

Nevertheless Bilāl (رضي الله عنه) would only continue saying "One, One", with more vigour.

Khabbāb (رضي الله عنه)

When the Quraish's savagery toward the oppressed Muslims became unbearable, one of them, Khabbāb ibn al Aratt, went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and sought help. Khabbāb (رضي الله عنه) reports:

"We went and complained to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and he was at that time lying in the shade of the Ka'aba using a cloak as a pillow. We said: "Will you not seek Allāh's help for us? Will you not pray for us?"

He replied: "Before your time a believer would be taken and a hole dug in the earth and he would be put in it. Then a saw would be brought and placed on his head and it would be split into two. Or he would be combed with an iron comb reaching just short of his flesh and bones. Yet that would not deter him from his faith."

'By Allāh, surely Allāh (ﷻ) will bring this matter to a conclusion so that a traveller will be able to travel from San'a' to Hadramaut, fearing no-one except Allāh (ﷻ), and the wolf over his sheep. However, you are being too hasty."

- ❑ What could Muhammad (ﷺ) have done for these oppressed people? He could not have extended protection to any-one of them since he did not possess the power even to protect himself. While at prayer in the Sacred Mosque, the intestines of a camel or the uterus of a sheep would be thrown on him, and at other times filth would be thrown in front of his doorstep, and all he could do was to bear it with patience.
- ❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) did not gather his Companions on the basis of any immediate or future gains. He removed the blind fold and they were able to see the truth which had been hidden from them

for some time; and he cleaned the rust from their minds and they became aware of the reality engrained in their natures, but of which they had been deprived by *jahilīyah*. He united people with their Lord, thus re-establishing their ancient and noble heritage, whereas before this they were in a state of perplexity and frustration. He balanced the fleeting and the everlasting for the people, and they chose the abode of the Hereafter in preference to this vanishing world. He offered them the choice between lowly idols and a Great God, and they discarded the idols and turned towards Him who created the heavens and the earth.

❑ It was enough glory for Muhammad (ﷺ) that he should be the one to offer this limitless good, and it was enough glory for his Companions that they should be the ones towards whom Providence directed it. So if they were molested, they were to be patient and if the worshippers of the filthy idols waged war on them, they were to stick to what they knew. One day the war between unbelief and faith would come to an end and disclose the martyrs and the believers who stood firm to the command of Allāh (ﷻ), and the idolaters who were routed by the permission of Allāh (ﷻ).

﴾And say those who do not believe: Act according to your power. Look! We [too] are acting. And wait! Look! We [too] are waiting. And Allah's is the Invisible of the heavens and the earth, and to Him will the whole matter be returned. So worship Him and put your trust unto Him. Look your *Rabb* is not unaware of what you [Mortals] do.﴿ (Qur'ān 11: 121-123)

❑ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) gradually inculcated the elements of trust in the hearts of his men and instilled in them what Allāh (ﷻ) had instilled in his heart; the deep confidence in the fact that Islām would be victorious; its principles would spread far and wide; and that the domination of the tyrannical rulers would crumble at the onslaught of its army at the east and the west. The scoffers, however, took this confidence as material for their taunts and jeering. Al Aswad ibn al Muṭṭalib and his

associates would, whenever they saw the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions, wink at each other and say: "Here come the kings of the earth who will tomorrow conquer the kingdoms of Khosrau and Caesar." Then they would whistle and applaud.

❑ Besides throwing obstacles in front of the *da'wah* in this manner, the idolaters urged one another to prevent any visitor in Makkah from listening to it. Al Walīd ibn al Mughīrah said to the men of the Quraish:

The people will come to you during the days of pilgrimage and ask you about Muhammad (ﷺ), and then you will all say different things. One will say "a poet", and another will say "possessed by a Jinn" However, he does not resemble any of those things, you say. The best that could be said of him is that he is a sorcerer because he causes division between a man and his brother and his wife.

❑ These conspirators stood at the gates of Makkah during the Ḥajj season and cautioned the people against that propagandist who rebelled against his tribe. They accused him of indulging in sorcery to separate brothers and couples, as they had agreed. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), nevertheless, went to the pilgrims in their gatherings and spoke to them of Islām and requested their support. Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) would stand at the Ḥajj station and say: 'Isn't there any man who will take me to his people? The Quraish have prevented me from conveying the words of my Lord.[14]

Negotiations

The idolaters thought that their harsh treatment towards the weak Muslims would deter others from responding to the caller; they thought that the various methods of scorn and ridicule which they employed would demoralize the Muslims so much that they would hide for shame of their faith and soon return to

[14] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Al Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah. Al Tirmidhī said it was a good and sound Ḥadīth. Al Ḥākim also narrated it and said it was authentic according to the stipulations of Bukhārī and Muslim.

the religion of their forefathers. The hopes of the idolaters were doomed to disappointment, however. Not a single Muslim forsook the truth with which Allāh (ﷻ) had blessed him; in fact the Muslims were on the increase. The methods of ridicule did not succeed in blocking anyone from Allāh's path or in distorting its features; they only strengthened the feeling of the Muslims that paganism contained nothing but disgrace and ignominy and that it ought to be rooted out from the society. What could the ridicule of an ignoramus do to a learned man?

﴾...though you mock us, yet we mock at you even as you mock. And you shall know to whom a punishment that will confound him comes, and upon whom a lasting doom will fall.﴿ (Qur'ān 11: 38-39)

❑ The Quraish sought to employ another strategy, which contained both allurement and threat. They sent to Muhammad (ﷺ), offering him any worldly thing that he desired, and they sent to his uncle, who was protecting him, warning him of the consequences of maintaining such protection and urging him to silence Muhammad (ﷺ) so as not to cause any harm to himself and his family.

❑ The Quraish sent 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah, who was a calm and composed man. He went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said:

"O nephew, you know the position which you hold among us because of your ancestry. However, you have brought a serious matter to your people and have broken up their community with it. So listen to me and I shall offer you some alternatives; perhaps you may accept one. If by this affair you wish to gain wealth, we shall collect all we can for you from ourselves so that you will become the richest of us. If you desire status, we shall make you our leader and shall never decide any affair without consulting you. If you desire to be a king, we shall make you king over us. And if that thing which visits you is an evil spirit which you cannot eradicate, we shall look for the best doctor and spend all we possess to have you cured."

❑ When he had finished, the Prophet (ﷺ) recited to him the

opening *āyāt* (verses) of Sūrah *Al Sajdah*:

﴾Ha, Mim. A Revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful, A scripture whose the āyāt (verses) are expounded, a lecture [Qur'ān] in Arabic for people who have knowledge. Good tidings and a warning. But most of them turn away so that they do no hear. And they say: "Our hearts are protected from that to which you [Muhammad] call us, and in our ears there is a deafness, and between us and you there is a veil. Do then [as you whish] We shall also do [as we wish]." Say [to them, Muhammad]: "I am only a mortal like you. It is inspired in me that your God is One God therefore take the straight path to Him and seek forgiveness of Him. And shame on the idolaters, Who do not pay the welfare tax and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter."﴿ (Qur'ān 41: 1-7)

He recited until he reached āyah 13, which says:

﴾But if they turn away, then say: 'I warn you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt [which fell of upon the old tribes] of 'Ad and Thamūd].[15]﴿ (Qur'ān 41: 13)

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) chose those āyāt (verses) from the blessed Revelation so that his interlocutor might know the reality of the message and the messenger. Muhammad (ﷺ) brought a Book from the Creator to His creation, which guided it away from error and saved it from destruction. He before all others was responsible for believing in it, acting upon it and submitting to all its dictates. Thus, when Allāh (ﷻ) demanded of His servants that they should tread the right path towards Him and seek His forgiveness it was Muhammad (ﷺ) who applied himself more than all the mankind to being upright and seeking forgiveness, without looking for kingship, wealth or status. Allāh (ﷻ) had already placed all of these things before him and he had turned away from them, disdaining to touch them. Instead, he gave away freely all the good-things that came his way. He spent a mountain of wealth in the path of Allāh (ﷻ) and when he left

[15]This story is transmitted by Ibn Is-hāq in *Al Maghāzi*. It is also narrated by Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* and in both cases the chain of narrators is a good one.

this earthly life he had not a *dirham* to bequeath to his progeny.

❑ 'Utbah on behalf of the Quraish wanted Muhammad (ﷺ) to give up calling towards Allāh (ﷻ) and establishing justice among the mankind. What would become of life if a piece of rock detached itself from the earth and flew through the strata of space to ask the sun or any other star to stop giving light and heat to the universe? What a strange request it was! How well it would be for the person who makes such a request to return home and stay there. In fact, after hearing these Qur'ānic āyāt 'Utbah's dormant thoughts began to stir. He listened to the threat and he was moved:

﴾**But if they turn away, then say: 'I warn you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt [which fell of upon the old tribes] of 'Ad and Thamūd.**﴿ (Qur'ān 41: 13)

'Utbah put his hands to his side and got up as if the thunderbolt were going to strike him. He returned speedily to the Quraish and urged them to leave Muhammad (ﷺ) alone.

❑ As for the Quraish's delegation to Abū Ṭālib, they told him:

"O Abū Ṭālib, your nephew has cursed our gods and criticized our religion; he has belittled our ideals and accused our forefathers of having gone astray. Either you keep him away from us let us deal with him; you are one of us, for you disagree with his views."

"Abū Ṭālib spoke nicely to them and rejected their proposal in a gentle manner. So they went away, and the Prophet (ﷺ) continued his *da'wah*. Soon relations between him and them reached such a low level that he became the center of all the Quraish's talk and plots. Once more they went to Abū Ṭālib and said:

"Abū Ṭālib, we respect you because of your age and nobility among us. We had requested you to restrain your nephew but you did not. By God, we shall not show tolerance to this cursing of our gods and forefathers and belittling of our customs. So either you restrain him from criticizing us or we shall fight him and you over this matter until one side perishes."

Then they left him.

❑ Abū Ṭālib felt very worried at the thought of separating from his people and at their show of enmity toward him. Nevertheless, he did not feel comfortable at handing over the Prophet (ﷺ) to them. So he sent a message to the Prophet (ﷺ), informing him of what the Quraish had said, and he urged: "look after yourself and me, and do not burden me with more than I can bear."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) thought that his uncle had changed his mind, withdrawn his protection from him and was helpless to defend him. So he said: "O Uncle, by Allāh (ﷻ), if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left so that I might give up this matter until Allāh (ﷻ) causes it to prevail or I die in the process, I should not give it up."[16]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) then wept and stood up. However, his uncle called him back and said: Go, nephew of mine, and say whatever you wish. By God shall never hand you over for anything." He also recited this couplet of poetry: "By God, they will never reach you with all their numbers until I am buried and sealed in the earth." Thus did allurements and threats fail to stop the *da'wah*.

❑ The Quraish realized that their target was far beyond their reach, so they went back to their old ways, pouring their anger upon the believers and expending their utmost energy to torture them and turn them away from their faith. The Prophet (ﷺ) became very sad at the misfortunes that befell his Companions while he was unable to stop them. He intimated to those who had little support and were fearful of remaining in Makkah that they should migrate to Abyssinia. This was in the fifth year after his ministry, or two years after he openly proclaimed his message.

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[16] A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Is-ḥāq and Ibn Jarīr. The person who reported this Ḥadīth, Ya'qub ibn 'Utbah, never met any of the Companions. He was thus a disciple of the Tabi'in. The story is also narrated by Al Ṭabarāni on the authority of 'Aqīl ibn Abi Ṭālib, and in this version, instead of "if they put..." it has. "I am no more capable of abandoning that with which I have been sent than of snatching a flame of fire from the sun." It continues, "And Abū Ṭalib said, "By God, my nephew has never lied. Go back and be of good cheer."

The Migration to Abyssinia

The journey to Abyssinia was a secret procedure so as not to arouse the Quraish, who would try to stop it. Nor did it begin on a large scale. The first batch was made up of a few families, among whom were Ruqayyah, daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), her husband, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (ﷺ), and a small group of other emigrants not exceeding sixteen in total. They headed for the sea where Providence had waiting for them two merchant ships, which took them to Abyssinia. By the time the Quraish had reached the shore in pursuit of their trail, they had already set sail. However, it was not long after they had settled in that land when the news came to them that the idolaters had concluded a truce with Islām and had agreed to leave the Muslims free to practise their religion without molestation. Thus they felt there was no harm in returning to Makkah. This rumour has its effect on the Muslim emigrants and they decided to return to their home-town. When they approached Makkah, thought, the woeful reality became apparent: the idolaters were more bitter than ever in their enmity towards Allāh (ﷻ), His Prophet and the believers, and their aggression had not ceased for one second.

❑ Some simpletons claim that there was actually a truce between Islām and paganism and it all came about because Muhammad (ﷺ) sought to curry favour with the idolaters by praising their idols and recognizing their status. They claim that this truce had brought the Muslims back from Abyssinia, what Muhammad (ﷺ) said in praise of the idols. The simpletons claim that he said: **﴾Those lofty cranes, And surely their intercession is to be sought.﴿**

❑ Where did he say these words? In Sūrah *Al Najm*, between the Qur'ānic *āyāt* (verses) which mention these idols. Thus it became like this:

﴾Have you thought upon Al Lāt and Al Uzzā and Manāt, the third, the other?﴿ (Qur'ān 43: 19-20)

Those lofty cranes,

And surely their intercession is to be sought.

﴾Are yours the males and His the females? That indeed were an unfair division! They are but names which you have given, you and your fathers, for which Allāh has revealed no warrant. They follow but a guess and that which [they] themselves desire. And now the guidance from their Lord has come to them.﴿ (Qur'ān 43: 21-23)

The meaning of this would be:

Tell me of your idols: are they so and so? Their intercession is desired. They are only names with no reality behind them: myths invented and followed. How do you make them feminine and ascribe them to Allāh (ﷻ) when you yourselves hate females (that is, daughters) to be ascribed to you? That would be an unfair division!

❑ Can such words come from an intelligent person? Not to speak of it being Revelation from the All-knowing. Yet such nonsense was actually written and conveyed by someone. If Muhammad (ﷺ) had told a lie on Allāh (ﷻ) by inventing some statement and claiming that it came from Him, his neck would surely have been severed according to the same Book which he brought. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴾And if he had invented false sayings concerning Us, We assuredly had taken him by the right hand And then severed his life-artery, and not one of you could have held Us off from him.﴿ (Qur'ān 69: 44-47)

❑ Nevertheless, the books of history and *tafsīr* which allowed the copyists and freethinkers to stuff them with falsities, also opened their pages to record this ugly calumny. Had the scholars been fully aware of its spuriousness it never should have been recorded at all. If you open the *tafsīr* of Al Khāzin at Sūrah *Hūd,* you read the following:

"When the droppings of the animals became too much in Nooh's (Noah) (ﷺ) Ark, Allāh (ﷻ) inspired him to squeeze the elephant's tail. He did so and a boar and a rat fell from it and they rushed to the droppings and devoured them. When the rat started causing confusion in the ark by gnawing at its boards and

rope, Allāh (ﷻ) inspired him to strike between the lion's eyes. He did so and a tom-cat and a she-cat came out of its nostrils; and they rushed to the rat and devoured it."

❑ What do you think of such trash? What do you think of the story of the cranes? Quite a few short of these fairy tales exist in a variety of our literature and I do not know when our literary heritage will be purified of them. No doubt they were thrown in during the days of the Muslims' negligence and Jewish conspiracies against their thoughts and writings.

❑ The authentic version of this story is that the Prophet (ﷺ) recited Sūrah *Al Najm* in a gathering of both Muslims and idolaters, and the final part of this Sūrah (chapter) was so striking that it stirred their hearts. So when the Prophet's (ﷺ) resounding voice reached the end of the Sūrah, the awesomeness of the truth had crushed the stubbornness in the hearts of the haughty and mocking idolaters and they could not hope but fall in prostration together with the Muslims. When they checked themselves, however, and found that they had been overcome by faith, they felt ashamed of themselves and wanted to make an excuse for what they did. They felt ashamed of themselves and wanted to make an excuse for what they did. They claimed that they prostrated with Muhammad (ﷺ) only because he had spoken kindly of their idols. This is not strange, coming from a people who were always composing satires to ridicule the Muslims, and one of them was not ashamed to say to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was the Prophet's (ﷺ) cousin on his mother's side: "Today you have indeed spoken from heaven, Muhammad (ﷺ)."

❑ There is nothing more disgusting than this excuse offered by the idolaters for their prostration except the acceptance of this excuse. The idolaters attempted to spread this calumny of theirs[17] to confuse the Prophet (ﷺ), confound Revelation and

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[17] Where is the historical proof of this reasoning that it was the idolaters who fabricated this charge and attempted to spread it? Such matters must have historical proof. What is there to rule out that this charge could have been invented afterwards? In fact, this is more plausible since there is no authentic narration of it from a *Ṣaḥabī*. All of its sources stop short of the *Ṣaḥābah* and none of the narrators was known to

insinuate that the Prophet (ﷺ) sometimes had leanings towards them. However, this was far beyond their reach, since the war which the Prophet (ﷺ) waged against paganism only increased in strength as the days went by.

❑ Those who had migrated to Abyssinia returned to Makkah to find that the persecution of the Muslims was fiercer and more cruel than ever. Some therefore entered under the protection of those whom they knew, while others hid themselves. But the Quraish insisted on persecuting them and incited other tribes to redouble their persecution of the Muslims. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) saw no alternative but to advise his Companions to migrate to Abyssinia once more. The second migration was more difficult than the first since the Quraish had become aware of it and were determined to foil it. The Muslims were quicker, however, and on this occasion eighty-three men and nineteen women left. Allāh (ﷻ) made the journey a safe one for them and they reached the Negus of Abyssinia, where they found the security, protection and welcome they were seeking. It is apparent that the Negus was an upright man with a sound mind and good knowledge of Allāh (ﷻ), and correctly believed in Jesus being a servant and Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ). The flexibility of his thought was the secret of the good treatment which he accorded these Muslims seeking refuge in his kingdom to preserve their faith from persecution.

❑ The idolaters felt terrible at the thought that the emigrants should find a place of refuge for themselves and their faith. They were incited by their hatred of Islām to send a delegation to the Negus, bearing gifts to dissuade him from extending his protection and kindness to the refugees. The delegation consisted of 'Amr ibn ul 'Ās and 'Abdullāh ibn Abi Rabi'ah before they accepted Islām and they sought the assistance of the Negus's men to approach him. They offered them gifts and supplied them with reasons for rejecting these refugees. They

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exist at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). I have explained in detail the falseness of this story in my forthcoming book.

said: "Some of our foolish people left the religion of their people and did not embrace the King's religion. Instead, they invented a new religion with which neither we nor you are acquainted."

❑ They agreed to advise the Negus to expel the refugees. When he was confronted with this matter, the Negus thought it best to examine the case from all angles and listen to both parties concerned. He sent for the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions and they came, having agreed to speak the truth to him in everything, whether it pleased him or not, and they selected Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) to be their spokesman.

❑ The Negus asked them: "What is this religion because of which you separated from your people and did not convert to my religion or anybody else's religion?"

❑ Ja'far (ﷺ) replied: "O King, we were a people living in ignorance: we worshipped idols, ate carrion, committed all manner of indecencies, treated our relatives and neighbours badly, and the strong among us oppressed the weak. Then Allāh (ﷻ) sent to us a Messenger from among us, whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and chastity we knew well. He invited us to believe in Allāh's unity and not to associate partners with him, and to give up the worship of idols. He ordered us to be truthful in our speech, to fulfil our trust, to be kind to our kith and kin, to love our neighbours and keep away from the forbidden things and bloodshed. He forbade us immorality, lying and embezzling the orphan's wealth. He ordered us to establish prayer and fast. He enumerated all the principles of Islām, then continued: "So we believed in him and put our trust in him: we forbade what he forbade and we permitted what he permitted. However our people were aggressive towards us: They tormented and persecuted us so that we might relinquish our faith and go back to the worship of idols. So when their oppression became unbearable and they hindered us from practising our religion, we came to your country, choosing you above others and hoping that we should not be wronged in your presence."

❑ The Negus said: "Do you remember any of the Revelations

which he has brought from Allāh (ﷻ)?" Jā'far (ﷺ) replied in the affirmative and recited to him a portion of Sūrah Maryam. The Negus and his bishops wept upon hearing it, and the Negus, speaking to 'Amr and Abdullāh ibn Abi Rabī'ah said: "Surely this and what Jesus brought came from the same niche. Go. By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall never hand them over to you."

❑ So they left the palace and 'Amr said to 'Abdullāh: "By God, tomorrow I'll return to him with something that will wither their greenery." The next morning, he went back to the Negus and said: "These people are spreading a great slander about Jesus, son of Mary."

❑ So the Negus again sent for the Muslims, asking them for their opinion of the Messiah, and Ja'far replied: "We say about him what our Prophet (ﷺ) told us: he is Allāh's (ﷻ) servant, messenger and spirit, and His word which He inspired into the Virgin Mary."

❑ The Negus then took up a stick from the ground[18] and said: "Jesus does not exceed what you have said more than the width of this stick." At this his bishops objected, and he said, "Your objection doesn't make any difference." Then he said to the Muslims: "Go in peace. I should not like to have a mountain of gold in return for harming a single man among you!" He returned the Quraysh's gift to them and said: "Allāh (ﷻ) did not take any bribe from me so that I might take it from you, and the people did not submit to me so that I might obey them concerning Him."[19]

❑ The Muslims remained in his country, enjoying the best reception. 'Amr's plan fell through and the delegation returned to Makkah in disappointment and failure. The Quraish realized that

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[18] The Christians of old differed over the nature of Issā (Jesus) (ﷺ) and split into several sects as a result. There was one sect which considered him to be a human Prophet and not a god or partner of God. In the Christian West there still remain some people who profess this monotheistic faith. We believe that the Negus of Abyssinia was of this creed although the church hierarchy totally disagreed with him.

[19] This story was narrated by Ibn Is-ḥāq in his *Al Maghāzi* and Aḥmad from him. The chain is good and it was Umm Salmah, wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), who reported it.

they could never appease their spite against Islām and the Muslims except within the borders of their jurisdiction. Thus they resolved to vengeance on any of the Muslims who fell into their hands.

Ḥamzah (ﷺ) and 'Umar (ﷺ) Accept Islām

It is possible that in the dark, heavily clouded sky lightning is produced which illuminates everything. The lines of the Muslims in Makkah were overladen for many days with thick clouds which forced quite a few families to flee to protect their faith, while others remained and bore the insults, provocations and machinations of the idolaters. However, some new elements entered into Islām, which made the Quraish think twice before executing any of their dastardly plots.

❑ Ḥamzah, son of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib and uncle of the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as his foster brother, was a strong and energetic man. He accepted Islām because of the anger he felt upon hearing that Abū Jahl had abused and attacked the Prophet (ﷺ).

A slave woman belonging to 'Abdullāh ibn Jud'ān, saw the incident and reported it to him, saying: "O Abū 'Amarah! You should have seen what Abul Ḥakam ibn Hishām did to your nephew Muhammad (ﷺ)! He abused him and insulted him, and then left, but Muhammad (ﷺ) never uttered a word."

❑ Ḥamzah became infuriated and he hurried to meet Abū Jahl, who was sitting with other members of his clan. He stuck him on the head with his bow, which left a deep gash, and then he said: "Are you abusing him while I belong to his faith?" as the saying goes: "We sought knowledge for worldly life but God insisted that it should be for His faith."

Ḥamzah's acceptance of Islām was in the first place the reaction of a man who refused to let his protégé be insulted. Then Allāh (ﷻ) expanded his heart and he took a firm grasp of that iron handhold, and the Muslims were ever after to feel unlimited pride in him.

❑ As for 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ), he was one of those who used to insult and scoff at the Muslims. He was famous for his

hot temper and tremendous strength, and the Muslims had long met with all kinds of injuries from him. The wife of 'Āmir ibn Rabi'ah reported:

We were about to set out for Abyssinia, and 'Āmir had left to look for something when 'Umar (ﷺ) appeared. At that time he was still an idolater and he used to treat us badly.

❑ He approached me and said:

"Are you all leaving, Umm 'Abdullāh?"

❑ I replied: "Yes, by Allāh (ﷻ), we are definitely going Allāh's land, so that Allāh (ﷻ) may show us a way out, since your people have injured and oppressed us."

❑ 'Umar (ﷺ) said: "May God be with you." I saw in him tenderness and sadness. So when 'Āmir returned I told him what had happened and said: I wish you had seen 'Umar's (ﷺ) tenderness and sadness for us."

❑ He then asked: "Do you have any hope that he will accept Islām?" I said yes. But he replied: "He will not accept Islām until Al Khaṭṭāb's donkey accepts Islām! This was as a result of what he saw of 'Umar's (ﷺ) harshness and severity towards the Muslims.

❑ Nevertheless, the woman's heart was truer than the man's opinion. 'Umar's (ﷺ) harshness was just a thin veneer beneath which lay hidden springs of tenderness, compassion and forbearance. Apparently there was a conflict going on in 'Umar's (ﷺ) mind between his respect for the traditions laid down by his ancestors and his indulgence in drunkenness and sport on the one hand, and his admiration for the staunchness of the Muslims and their capacity to bear injuries for the sake of their ideology on the other. Moreover, he must have reflected greatly, like any intelligent person, that what Islām was promoting, was nobler and purer than anything else he had known. Thus no sooner had he flared up, than he cooled down. He was going to kill Muhammad (ﷺ) but was diverted by the thought that his sister and her husband had accepted Islām. He confronted them in their home, shouting threateningly. He

struck his sister and injured her. The sight of flowing blood brought him to his senses and the feelings of goodness and virtue within him took over. He picked up a piece of paper on which a few Qur'ānic *āyāt* were written, and as he read them he said: "How excellent and noble are these words!" 'Umar (ﷺ) bowed to the truth and walked to the Prophet (ﷺ), to whom he declared his conversion.

❑ When his heart was cleansed from all its blemishes and his Islām was purified, he became a tremendous help to the army of Allāh (ﷻ). The Muslims felt braver and stronger while the unbelievers felt more angry and frustrated. The Quraish saw that Islām was going stronger and that their previous attempts at resisting it did not stop it from spreading or even deterr its supporters. They reviewed their entire strategy and planned a new one, which was tougher, more detailed and more comprehensive.

The General Boycott

Pagan malice produced an agreement whereby the Muslims and all those who approved of their religion or sympathized with them or protected any of them were considered to be outcasts from the rest of the society. The idolaters agreed not to trade with the Muslims nor to intermarry with them. They consequently wrote this agreement on a parchment and hung it inside the Ka'bah as a sacred pact. There is no doubt that the hot-tempered extremists among the pagans succeeded in imposing their views and satisfying their malice. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers were forced into confinement in the Valley of Banū Hāshim and all of the Banū Muṭṭalib went with them, Muslims as well as unbelievers except Abū Lahab who supported the Quraish in their enmity toward his clan.

❑ This blockade of the Muslims was tightly controlled, and as a result they were cut off from any assistance. At times their provisions ran so low that the plaintive cries of the children were heard outside the valley, and they endured such trying

circumstances that eventually their enemy took pity on them. Thus they really bore immense sufferings for the sake of Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ Al Suhayli reported:

Whenever a caravan arrived in Makkah, one of the *Ṣaḥābah* would come to the market to buy food for his family. However, Abū Lahab would stand up and say: Merchants, raise the prices of your goods for Muhammad's (ﷺ) Companions so that they cannot make any bargain with you. You are aware of my wealth and loyalty, and I stand surety that there will be no loss for you!" They would then increase the prices of their various commodities, and the Companion would return to his children who were writhing with hunger without any food to give them. The merchants would go to Abū Lahab the next morning and make a profit on whatever food or clothing they bought, whereas the believers were left hungry and ill-clad.

❑ Yūnus reported from Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqās who said:

"I went out one night to pass urine and I heard a crackle under the urine: it was a piece of dried camel's skin. I took it and washed it, then I roasted it and crushed it in water, and I gained strength from it for three days."

❑ Look in how serious a condition the blockade placed the Muslims, and how privation drove them to eat unpalatable stuff! These sufferings grieved those of the Quraish who had some feeling of compassion: one of them would load his camel with provisions, lead it in the direction of the valley, and then leave it to reach the inhabitants, and this would alleviate their distress to some extent.

❑ How long did this blockade last? For three long years only the bond of faith kept the hearts together and gave them strength to bear the conditions. It was natural that the Muslims would want to escape from their predicament as quickly as possible. For a long time they were promised victory and supremacy but they found only an unfair rest. Here they were being oppressed in a land which had rejected them. No doubt their hearts were filled with anger at those idolaters who scoffed at all the high moral

standards, and who were sceptical of their ever becoming and prevalent as they were sceptical of the Hereafter. Even if those who were being oppressed did not seek help to save them from their misery, they could surely have sought it to the unbelievers ashamed and to instil manners into those who were insolent.

❑ Revelation would, however, descend and demand of the Muslims that they should remain with certainty and steadfastness without looking forward to any retribution of that sort. They ought to praise Allāh (ﷻ) for making aware of the realities of faith and should derive from that the ability to resist the pressures which the days brought them.

﴾Whether We show you [Muhammad] something of that which We promise them or [whether We] cause you to die, still to Us is their return, and Allāh, moreover, is witness over what they do. And for every nation there is a messenger. When their messenger comes [on the Day of Judgement] it will be judged between them fairly, and they will not be wronged.﴿ (Qur'ān 10: 46-47)

❑ The idolaters too were in hurry to end the struggle between themselves and the Muslims. They were in a hurry because they thought it was an easy victory, and because they did not believe in a resurrection after death or a reward and punishment. It never occurred to them that one day, sooner or later, a dawn would break over Makkah emptied of Idols, when the call of unity would resound in every corner, and when those imprisoned in the valley would be in control while the rulers would be prisoners seeking amnesty! Their conviction that today and tomorrow belonged to them make it easy for them to poke fun at such threats.

﴾And they say: "When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are truthful?" Say: "I have no power to hurt or benefit myself save that which Allāh wishes. For every nation there is an appointed time: When their time comes, then they cannot put it off an hour, nor hasten it." Say: "Have you thought: when His doom comes to you as a raid by night, or in the [busy] day; what is there of it that the guilty ones

desire to hasten? "Is it [only] then when it has happened to you, that you will believe? What! [Believe] now when [until now] you have been hastening it on [through disbelief]?" (Qur'ān 10: 48-51)

❑ Acceptance of Islām and remaining steadfast to it was beyond any suspicion of ulterior motive. It is possible that a group of people could embrace a particular ideology with sincerity and conviction and yet seek personal benefit and advancement by it. Nevertheless, those early converts to Islām knew that the first sacrifice they would have to make on behalf of their faith was loss of all personal benefits and interests. I cannot see anything more capable of nurturing sincerity and dedication to a cause in any soul than this self-sacrifice for the truth and the truth alone. Moreover, the Qur'ān was very determined in its eradication of trafficking with faith, enriching oneself at its expense and elevating oneself in its name.

﴾Whoever wishes for the life of the world and its pomp, We shall repay them for their actions in it, and they will not be wronged thereby. Those are they for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter save the fire. [All] that they contrive here is vain and [all] that they are wont to do is fruitless.﴿ (Qur'ān 11: 15-16)

❑ The *Ṣaḥābah* benefited tremendously from this training and perfected their chastity, purity and sincerity to such an extent that history can find no match for them. Thus when the crowns of the kings fell at their feet and the wealthy regions surrendered to their armies, it was the motivation and objective of the faith which occupied their minds before and after victory. They did not give any thought to gold or silver. All they were concerned with firstly and lastly was the establishment of prayer, the payment of *Zakāh* and the enjoinment of good and prohibition of evil.

❑ During the days of the blockade the Muslims continued to meet the pilgrims during the season of pilgrimage, and they did not allow their straitened conditions to stop them from conveying the message to every delegation. Suppression does not kill a movement; on the contrary it increases its roots in depth and its

branches in length. The Islāmic movement gained many supporters during this period, and gained, besides that, from the fact that the idolaters had started to disgrace among themselves, and were questioning the correctness of what they were doing. In addition, a group of them had begun working to frustrate the boycott and cancel the pact written on the parchment.

❑ The first person to make a successful attempt was Ḥishām ibn 'Amr, who was very upset about the terrible plight of the Muslims. He went to Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah, whose mother was 'Athikah bint 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, and who was very concerned about the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims. He said to Zuhayr: O Zuhayr, are you content to eat food, wear clothes and marry women while your (maternal) uncles are in such a state? I swear by God that if they were the uncles of Abū Hakam (That is, Abū Jahl) and you invited him to do what he invited you to do, he would never respond to you!"

❑ "What can I do? I am one man. By God, if there was another man with me I should break the pact!"

❑ "You have found another man!"

❑ "You! who is he?

❑ Me."

❑ Let's find a third."

❑ So Ḥishām went to Al Mut'im ibn 'Adi and said to him: "Are you content to let two families of the Banu 'Abd Manaf perish? Do you witness that and approve of it? By God, if you allow them to do that, you will find them quicker to do the same to you!"

❑ "What can I do? I am only one man."

❑ "I have found a second."

❑ "Who?"

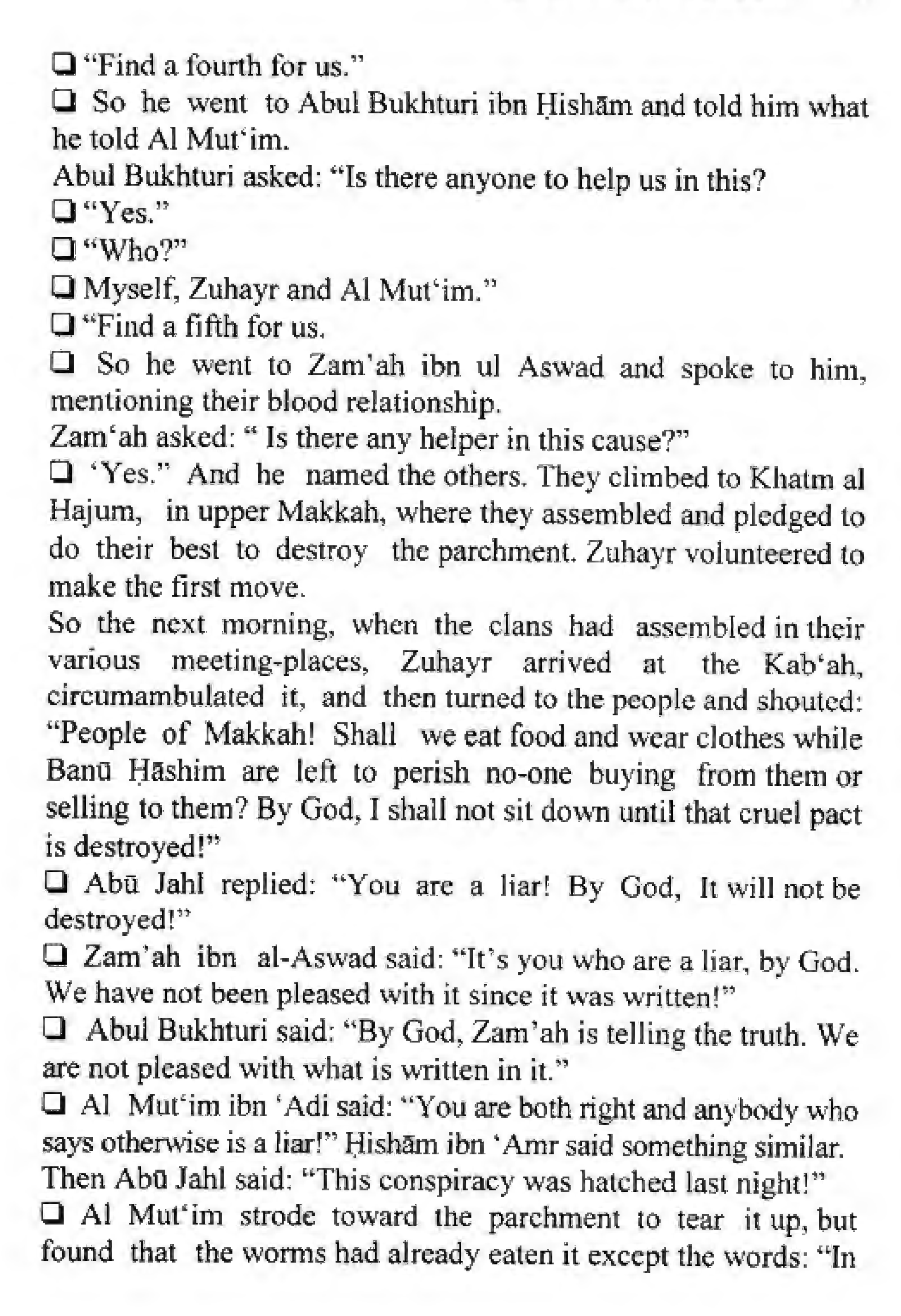
❑ "Myself."

❑ "Find a third for us."

❑ "I have done so."

❑ "Who?"

❑ "Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah."



❑ "Find a fourth for us."
❑ So he went to Abul Bukhturi ibn Ḥishām and told him what he told Al Mut'im.
Abul Bukhturi asked: "Is there anyone to help us in this?
❑ "Yes."
❑ "Who?"
❑ Myself, Zuhayr and Al Mut'im."
❑ "Find a fifth for us.
❑ So he went to Zam'ah ibn ul Aswad and spoke to him, mentioning their blood relationship.
Zam'ah asked: " Is there any helper in this cause?"
❑ 'Yes." And he named the others. They climbed to Khatm al Hajum, in upper Makkah, where they assembled and pledged to do their best to destroy the parchment. Zuhayr volunteered to make the first move.
So the next morning, when the clans had assembled in their various meeting-places, Zuhayr arrived at the Kab'ah, circumambulated it, and then turned to the people and shouted: "People of Makkah! Shall we eat food and wear clothes while Banū Ḥāshim are left to perish no-one buying from them or selling to them? By God, I shall not sit down until that cruel pact is destroyed!"
❑ Abū Jahl replied: "You are a liar! By God, It will not be destroyed!"
❑ Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad said: "It's you who are a liar, by God. We have not been pleased with it since it was written!"
❑ Abul Bukhturi said: "By God, Zam'ah is telling the truth. We are not pleased with what is written in it."
❑ Al Mut'im ibn 'Adi said: "You are both right and anybody who says otherwise is a liar!" Ḥishām ibn 'Amr said something similar. Then Abū Jahl said: "This conspiracy was hatched last night!"
❑ Al Mut'im strode toward the parchment to tear it up, but found that the worms had already eaten it except the words: "In

Your Name, O God." (The Arabs used to begin their writings with these words).

The Year of Sorrow

The Muslims who left the valley to resume their previous activities after Islām had spent in Makkah almost ten years packed with momentous events. However, they had hardly taken a breath of relief from their troubles when the Prophet (ﷺ) was afflicted with the loss of his wife Khadījah and his uncle Abū Ṭālib. In other words, he was afflicted in both his public and private life at the same time.

❑ Khadījah was one of Allāh's greatest blessings on Muhammad (ﷺ). She supported him in the most trying times and assisted him in fulfilling his mission. She participated with him in the perils of bitter struggle, and encouraged him with her person and her wealth. You will appreciate the value of this bounty when you realize that of the wives of the previous prophets, there were those who betrayed their husbands, disbelieved in them, sided with the idolaters and waged war against Allāh (ﷻ) and His messenger.

﴾Allah has cited an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot, who were under two of Our righteous servants yet betrayed them so that they [the husbands] availed them naught against Allah and it was said [to them]: enter the Fire along with those who enter.﴿ (Qur'ān 66: 10)

❑ On the other hand, Khadījah was the truthful among women. She showered her love on her husband in the hours of distress; she was the breath of peace and righteousness; she wiped his sweating forehead during the after-effects of Revelation; she remained with him for a quarter of a century; she respected his contemplation, withdrawal and natural characteristics long before Revelation came; she suffered the conspiracies of his

enemies, the miseries of the blockade and the pains of the *da'wah* after Revelation came; and she died while he was in his fiftieth year and she was over 65 years of age. He was faithful to her memory for the rest of his life.

❑ As for Abū Ṭālib, he was of a confusing character. In the same measure as one admires his nobility in bringing up Muhammad (ﷺ), and his courage in defending him as a Prophet after he had proclaimed his Lord's Message and warned his closest relatives, one is perplexed at the way his life ended, and how he insisted with his last breath that he belonged to the faith of his ancestors. The Prophet (ﷺ) was extremely sad at Abū Ṭālib's death: was he not the fortress which protected the *daw'ah* from the attacks of the arrogant and the foolish? Here he lay dead, the man who had exploited his position and authority to defend his nephew and protect him from any calamity. Now the Quraish did not need to fear anyone any-more in their confrontation with Muhammad (ﷺ). It is reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "The Quraish were unable to make me do anything which I disliked until the death of Abū Ṭālib."[20]

❑ They became bold in insulting him and they even threw dust on his head. Ibn Mas'ūd reported.

"While the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was praying near the House (that is, the Ka'bah), Abū Jahl and his colleagues were seated nearby, where there had been a camel slaughtered the previous day."

Abū Jahl said: "Which one of you will take the stomach of so and so's camel and throw it between Muhammad's (ﷺ) shoulders (on his back) when he prostrates?" The most unfortunate of them got up, and when the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated he threw it on his back, and they all laughed, leaning

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[20] A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Isḥāq as *mursal* with a sound chain on the authority of 'Urwah ibn Al Zubayr.

on one another. I was standing there, looking, and if I had had the protection I should have taken it off his back. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) remained in prostration, not raising his head until someone went and told Fāṭimah. Although she was still a little girl, she came and removed it. Then she turned to them and started abusing them. When the Prophet (ﷺ) finished praying he raised his voice and supplicated against them. It was his habit, whenever he supplicated, to supplicate three times, and whenever he asked, to ask three times.

❑ "Three times he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), seize the Quraish." When they heard this they stopped laughing, fearful of his supplication. Then he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), seize Abū Jahl ibn Ḥishām; 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, Al Walīd ibn 'Utbah, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'it," and he mentioned the seventh whom I do not remember. By Him Who sent Muhammad (ﷺ) with the truth, I indeed saw those whom he called killed on the day of Badr and thrown into the trench (which was dug for the dead after the battle)."[21]

❑ Makkah had proceeded along the path of unbelief until she had penetrated deeply into it and reached its limits. Now she was delighting in polluting the prostraters with filth, and was bent double with laughter at the sight of its sliding down their shoulders. There was no space left in these hearts for a speck of goodness. In Arabian society, a daughter lived of her father, proud of his strength and enjoying his protection. What feelings would pass through a man's heart to see himself in a position where he had to be defended by his daughter while he himself was helpless? Muhammad (ﷺ) suppressed his hurt and suffered all the pains for Allāh's sake. Soon he began to think of redirecting his message to another town, which perhaps might

[21] A sound Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Al Nasā'ī and Aḥmad. It is Abū Is-ḥāq who said he mentioned "the seventh whom I do not remember." He was Al Sabai', as Muslim's narration clarifies. In a version of Bukhārī and Aḥmad, however, the seventh was 'Amarah ibn Al - Walid.

respond more quickly and favourably. He consequently took Zayd ibn Ḥāritha along with him and headed toward the tribe of Thaqīf, seeking their support.

In Ṭā'if

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) went to Ṭā'if where the Thaqīf lived. It is about 50 miles from Makkah, and he travelled there and back on foot. When he reached it he approached the men in the leadership and spoke to them about Islām, calling them to submit to Allāh (ﷻ). However, they all gave him a bad reception and responded harshly. He spent about ten days visiting them in their homes, but to no avail. When the Prophet (ﷺ) despaired of favourable response from them, he asked them to keep his visit a secret. He feared that if the matter should reach the ears of the Quraish, it would increase their enmity and malice.

The Thaqīf, however, were even ruder than expected. They replied, saying: "Get out of our country!" They incited the youngest and street rabble to pelt him with stones. Zayd (رضي الله عنه) tried in vain to defend him and in the process his head was injured. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself sustained such serious injuries that blood began to flow freely from them. The pursuers forced them to take refuge in garden belonging to 'Utbah and Shybah, sons of Rabi'ah. There he sat in the shade of a grapevine, seeking rest and security. The gardeners, who were around, chased away the rabble, and the Prophet (ﷺ) sat there, reflecting on his miserable condition. Memories of his sufferings at the hands of the Quraish came back to him: he was dragging behind him a heavy chain of consecutive failures. So he cried out:

"O Allāh (ﷻ), to you I complain of the weakness of my strength, the meagreness of my strategy and my insignificance to people. You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy; You are the Lord of the oppressed and You are my Lord. To a distant person who will despise me, or to an enemy to whom you have granted power over me? If you are not angry with me then I do not care. However, Your pardon is best for me. I seek refuge in the light of Your Countenance, for which darkness has

become illuminated and upon which the prosperity of this world and the Hereafter stands, from your anger befalling me, or Your displeasure afflicting me. It is Your right to scold until you are pleased, and there is no strength or power save in You."

❑ The feelings of kinship stirred in the hearts of Rabi'ah's sons as they summoned a Christian slave of theirs, who was called 'Addās, and asked him to take a handful of grapes to the Prophet (ﷺ).

When 'Addās placed them in front of him, he said: "In the Name of Allāh (ﷻ)," then ate them.

❑ Thereupon 'Addās said: "This phrase is not used by the people of this land!"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) then asked him: "What land are you from?"

❑ "I am a Christian from Nineveh."

❑ "From the town of the pious man Jonah, son of Matta?"

❑ Where did you hear about Jonah?"

❑ "That is my brother. He was a prophet and I am a prophet." 'Addās bent over the prophet's hands and feet and kissed them.

❑ One of Rabi'ah's sons said to the other: "Now he has spoiled your slave for you!"

❑ When 'Addās returned they asked him what the matter was all about and he replied that there was no-one better than that man.[22] The two brothers then tried to belittle Muhammad's (ﷺ) status and make their slave stick to his former religion as though they were upset at the thought of Muhammad (ﷺ) leaving Ṭā'if with any gain.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) returned to Makkah, the town which had expelled the choicest of its people, some of whom migrated to Abyssinia and others who were forced to bear the perpetual persecution or flee to the mountaintops.

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[22] This story is narrated by Ibn Isḥāq with a sound chain from Muhammad ibn Ka'b of the Banu Qurayzah as a mursal Ḥadīth. However, the statement "If you refuse, then keep it a secret", and the whole of the *du'ā* starting "O Allāh (ﷻ) to You I complain...." He quotes without reference. Likewise Ibn Jarīr narrated it through Ibn Is-ḥāq. Al Ṭabarāni also narrated the story from the Ḥadīth of 'Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far (رضي الله عنه) in a shortened form and the *du'ā* is mentioned in a similar manner. Al Haythami said: "In the chain is Ibn Isḥāq and he is a fraud, but the rest of them in the chain are reliable. Thus the Ḥadīth is weak.

Zayd (ﷺ) asked: "How can you confront those who threw you out?"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "O Zayd (ﷺ), Allāh (ﷻ) is going to provide release from what you see."

❑ Undoubtedly the news from the Thaqīf had preceded him to the Quraish. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) thought it best not to enter Makkah until he could assure safety for himself and his *Da'wah*. He sent a message to Al Mut'im ibn 'Adi, appealing for protection to continue preaching the Message of his Lord! Al-Mut'im acceded to this request and gathered his sons, who armed themselves and stood at the corners of the Ka'bah.

Al-Mut'im himself mounted his camel and called out: "O assembly of Quraish! I have given Muhammad (ﷺ) protection, so let none of you accost him."

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) entered, and when he reached the Ka'bah he prayed two *raka't*. Then he went to his home with Al-Mut'im and his sons guarding him.[23]

It is reported that Abū Jahl asked Al-Mut'im: "Are you granting asylum or are you a follower, a Muslim?" He replied that he had only granted asylum, to which Abū Jahl said: "We have granted asylum to whom you have granted asylum!" The Prophet (ﷺ) always remembered this deed of Al-Mut'im, for he said on the day of Badr when the Makkans were taken captives. "If Al-Mut'im were alive I would have released these rascals for his sake."

❑ Al-Mut'im, like Abū Ṭālib, remained in the religion of his ancestors. He was also like him in his courage and assistance to others. Abū Jahl wanted to ridicule a Prophet (ﷺ) who needed asylum! He might have wondered why did a group of angels did not descend to protect him. Thus when he saw him, he said: "Here is your Prophet (ﷺ), clan of 'Abd Manaf!"

❑ 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah said in reply, "And is it not possible that there should be a Prophet and a king from among us?"

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[23] I did not find any claim for this narration. Ibn Jarīr also mentioned something similar without a chain. He said: "Someone mentioned.." and perhaps this someone is Al Amawi in his *Maghāzi* since Ibn Kathīr also ascribed it to him without a chain.

❑ When the Prophet (ﷺ) was informed of Abū Jahl's question and 'Utbah's reply, he said: "As for you, 'Utbah, you did not get angry for Allāh's sake; you got angry for yourself."

This was because he said it out of clannishness and not out of faith. The Prophet (ﷺ) continued: "And as for you, Abū Jahl, by Allāh (ﷻ), it will not be long before you shall laugh little and cry much. And as for you, people of the Quraish, by Allāh (ﷻ), it will not be long before you enter into that which you are denying." In this comment there is enough evidence of the Prophet's (ﷺ) confidence in a bright future, even though the present might have been heavy with sufferings.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) returned to Makkah to resume his previous methods of presenting Islām and conveying the message of Allāh, and while he was in pursuit of his struggle the events of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* took place.

The *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj*

By the word *Isrā'* is meant that strange journey which started from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah and ended at the Farthest Mosque in Jerusalem. By the word *Mir'āj* is meant the ascension, which took place after this journey, into the layers of the heavens where to that point the knowledge of created beings stops and whose extent no-one can fathom, then the return to the Sacred Mosque in Makkah. The Qur'ān has referred to both journeys in different Sūrahs. The *Isrā'* and the reason for it are mentioned as follows:

﴾Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship to the Far Distant Place of Worship, whose neighbourhood We have blessed, that We might show him Our tokens! Behold! He, only He, is the Hearer, the Seer.﴿ (Qur'ān 17: 1)

The *Mir'āj* and its fruits are mentioned as follows:

﴾Indeed he saw him [that is, the Angel Gabriel] yet another time, By the lote-tree of the utmost boundary, is the Garden of Abode. When that which shrouds did enshroud the lote-tree, They turned not aside

nor yet was overbold. Indeed, he saw one of the greater revelations of his Lord.》 (Qur'ān 53: 13-18)

Thus the reason for the *Isrā'*, as the āyah (verse) states, is that Allāh (ﷻ) wanted to show His servant some of His (ﷻ) signs; and the other āyāt explain that the Prophet (ﷺ) did actually see some of these greater signs.

❑ The scholars of old have differed over whether this miraculous journey was in spirit alone or in spirit as well as body. The vast majority uphold the later view. Dr Haykal, however, has an unusual view. He considers it to be a mental and spiritual reinforcement of the oneness of existence throughout eternity in a period of unique spiritual enlightenment occurring to a pure and noble human being like Muhammad (ﷺ). During this period of enlightenment, in which he could see the whole of creation, he was able to absorb all the realities of faith and worldly life and witness all manner of reward and punishment, etc.

❑ The *Isrā'* was thus real, although, according to him, it was spiritual not physical. Nevertheless it was in wakefulness, not in sleep. Thus it was not a true dream, as some people think, but an actual event happening exactly as he explains it. He goes on to say: "And no power can undertake that ascent except one who is beyond the understanding of human nature."

❑ The truth is that the boundaries between the spiritual powers and the material powers have begun to fade, and what people considered easy in the spiritual world is not impossible in the world of matter. I believe of matter. I believe that now science has taken away the veil from the secrets of the universe, the problem of matter resembles the problem of the spirit: no-one knows its fullest extent except the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth. People have remained bewildered since they have learnt that the atom represents a solar system within itself, revolving around an axis. Although it is only a mere speck, it contains tremendous energy which, if released, could reduce everything to ashes.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) was taken on this night journey and ascension. But how? Did he ride some vehicle which travelled

faster than the speed of sound, as people have lately invented? He rode the *burāq*, a being whose step reached the furthest extremity as if it walked with the speed of light. The word *burāq* is derived from *barq*, which means lightening. In other words, the power of electricity was used on this journey. However, the human body in its ordinary state cannot possibly be transported through the atmosphere at the speed of flashing light: there must be some special preparation which protects its various parts and fortifies them for this distant journey.

❑ I believe that the narrations of the opening of the Prophet's (ﷺ) chest, the washing of his heart and its restoration are the symbols of this inevitable preparation. The story of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* is flooded with such symbols conveying special meanings, although they are imperceptible to the simple-minded. The *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* happened to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in person at a time when his spirit had reached its peak of enlightenment and the density of his body had decreased to the point where it had freed itself of most of the laws which controlled it.

❑ Probing the reality of this journey and following all its stages with minute observation depends upon the ability of the human mind to perceive the reality of matter and spirit and the power and characteristics with which Allāh (ﷻ) has endowed it. Therefore we shall leave this discussion for one which is easier and more beneficial. We shall discuss those main features connected with Islām in its capacity as a universal message and as a clearly defined system of law.

❑ The story of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'āj* should concern us from this point of view. Do you not see that psychology was not analysed deeply and did not flourish until the day when the world disentangled itself from discussions on the spirit and blind grouping into its importance.

Why was the journey first to Jerusalem, and why did it not proceed directly from the Sacred Mosque to the lote-tree of the utmost boundary?

❑ This takes just back into ancient history. For long epochs the prophets came specifically to the Children of Israel, and

Jerusalem remained the centre of revelation, the lighthouse of the world and the metropolis of the chosen people of Allāh (ﷻ). When the Jews ignored the sanctity of revelation and broke the divine laws, Allāh's curse fell upon them and He decided to deprive them forever of prophethood. Thus revelation came to Muhammad (ﷺ), showing that the spiritual leadership of the world had been taken from one nation and handed over to another, from one country to another, from the Children of Isreal to the descendants of Isma'īl. This privation enraged the Jews and led them to reject it outright:

﴾Evil is that for which they sell their soul: that they should disbelieve in that which Allāh has revealed, grudging that Allāh should reveal of His bounty whom He will of His bondmen. They have incurred anger upon anger.﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 90)

❑ The will of Allāh (ﷻ) was done, however, and the new nation accepted its role. The Arab Prophet (ﷺ) inherited the teachings of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), Isma'īl (ﷺ), Isḥāq (ﷺ) and Ya'qub (ﷺ), and he undertook the struggle in order to spread them. He was successful in gathering the people to them, and thus he joined the present to the past.

❑ It is therefore natural that all should be united in a single reality by Islām's observance of the Farthest Mosque as the third of its sanctuaries. Similarly the Prophet's journeying by night to it was a mark of respect for the faith which had of old been nurtured in its precincts. Moreover, Allāh (ﷻ) gathered all the previous prophets who brought guidance in this land and around it to form a reception for the bearer of the final Message. The prophets attested to the truth of one another, and each prepared the ground for the next. It is a fact that Allāh (ﷻ) took a covenant from the prophets of the Children of Israel in this regard.

﴾When Allah made [His] covenant with the Prophets, [He said]: behold that which I have given you of the Scripture and knowledge. And afterward there will come to you a messenger, confirming that which you possess. You will believe in him and you will help him. He said: do you agree, and will you take up My burden [which I lay

you] in this [matter]? They answered: we agree. He said: then bear witness. I shall be a witness with you.》 (Qur'ān 3: 81)

❑ In the authentic sources it is recorded that the Messenger led his brother prophets in two *rak'ahs* of prayer in the Mosque. This leadership was a plain acknowledgement that Islām was Allāh's last message to the mankind and had taken its final form in the hands of Muhammad (ﷺ) after the noble prophets of Allāh (ﷻ) had prepared the ground for it.

❑ To reveal the status of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the faith he preached is not to eulogize him at celebrations organized in his honour. It is to explain the undeniable truth, which was established from the moment heaven undertook the responsibility to guide earth. He came at the time which was ordained for him and which was the most suitable.

❑ The struggle which Muhammad (ﷺ) bore on his shoulders on behalf of the *da'wah* had exposed him to a violent storm of hatred and calumnies and shattered the calm of his followers. Since they had begun to believe in him they had never been able to taste the sweet comfort of family and wealth. The latest of these problems encountered by the *da'wah* was the Thaqīf's expulsion of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his re-entry into Makkah under the protection of an idolater. The contempt with which the people had looked at him since he had begun his preaching made him seek refuge in the Lord of the mankind with complaint and hope.

❑ Thus as a consolation to the Prophet (ﷺ) and as a blessing, Allāh (ﷻ) prepared this heavenly journey to comfort his heart and make him aware that He had been watching him ever since the day he professed His unity and worship of Him and started to teach the mankind of His unity and worship. He would say: "If you are not angry with me, then I do not care.[24]

❑ Thus that night he knew for certain that Allāh's pleasure with him was boundless and that his position among the best of those whom Allāh (ﷻ) had selected was first and foremost.

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[24] This Ḥadīth has already been proved weak in the story of Ṭā'if.

The *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* took place almost midway in the span of prophethood, which lasted for twenty-three years, and so they were a balm for the hardships of the past and a planting of the seeds of success for the future. The sight of some of Allāh's greatest signs in the kingdom of the heavens and the earth must have had a decisive effect in belittling the plots of the unbelievers and their numbers while telling of their ultimate fate.

❑ On this journey Muhammad (ﷺ) knew that his message would spread throughout the earth and settle in the fertile valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, and that these regions would be wrested from the hands of the Persian fire-worshippers and Trinitarian Romans. In fact, the residents of these places would become the torch-bearers of Islām from generation to generation. This is the meaning of his seeing the Nile and the Euphrates in the heavens. It does not mean that the waters of these two rivers spring from Heaven, as simple-minded and foolish people believe.

❑ Al Tirmidhī reported, for example, that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "When one of you is given the *rayḥān* sweet basil, he should not refuse it for it has come from heaven.[25]

Does this prove that the *rayhān* is from Heaven, while we are able to pick its flowers in the fields and gardens?

The Wisdom of the *Isrā'*

Apart from that Allāh (ﷻ) provides the opportunity for His Messengers to observe the great manifestations of His power so that their hearts might be filled with confidence in Him and dependence on Him when they confront the allied forces of the

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[25] A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī through Ḥanan, who reported form 'Abū 'Uthmān Al-Nahdi as a *mursal* Ḥadīth. Apart from it being *mursal*, Hanan is unknown and only Ibn Ḥibbān authenticated him. If the Ḥadīth was sound, it would be more fitting to take its surface meaning, which is that the *rayhān* is originally from heaven. This does not mean that whatever we pick in the fields is from heaven also, as the author thinks. Do you not see that when a man says about water in a glass, "this is from Heaven. "he is telling the truth and this meaning is clear? Similar to this is the authentic saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) that four rivers are from heaven. This means that they were originally from heaven, not that they now spring from there.

unbelievers and attack their standing authority. Before sending Mūsa (Moses), Allāh (ﷻ) wished him to see His wonderful powers and so ordered him to throw down his staff.

﴾He said: "Cast it down, O Moses!" So he cast it down, and Behold! It was a snake, gliding. He said: "Grasp it and do not fear We shall return it to its former state. "And thrust your hand into your armpit; it will come out white without harm [that will be] another token. 'That We may show thee [Some] of Our greater portents.﴿ (Qur'ān 20: 19-23)

When his heart was filled with wonder at the sight of these great signs, Allāh (ﷻ) then said to him:

﴾Go to Pharaoh! Behold He has transgressed [the bounds].﴿ (Qur'ān 20: 24)

❑ You are aware that the fruit of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* was that Allāh (ﷻ) showed the Prophet (ﷺ) these great signs, and you may say: "This happened almost twelve years after prophethood, contrary to the case of Moosa (Moses) (ﷺ)." This is true, and the secret of it is what we have already explained; that miracles in the lives of the previous prophets were meant to subdue their people into belief in their truthfulness. Miracles are thus a support for them, when forced with the wild accusations of their enemies. However, The life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was above this level.

❑ The Qur'ān took responsibility from the first day for convincing those who had understanding, and miracles came into the Prophet's (ﷺ) life as a form of distinction to his personality and consolation to himself. This did not disturb or paralyse the normal rational method that the Qur'ān employed.[26] The idolaters themselves had challenged the Prophet (ﷺ) to ascend into the sky and the reply came from Allāh (ﷻ).

[26] See my book *'Aqīdat al-Muslim*.

﴾Say [O Muhammad]: My Lord be glorified! Am I nothing but a mortal messenger?﴿ (Qur'ān 17: 93)

Afterwards, when he did ascend into the heavens, he never once mentioned that this was in reply to the challenge. The affair was, as we have mentioned, purely a distinction and additional information granted by Allāh (ﷻ) to His servant.

The Completion of the Building

In the story of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* you will observe the close bonds which link all the Prophets of Allāh (ﷺ). This concept is a deep-rooted Islāmic principle.

﴾The messenger believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord and [so do] the believers. Each one believes in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers, we make no distinction between any of His messengers.﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 285)

The greeting that were exchanged between the Prophet (ﷺ) and his fellow Messengers give added strength to this bond. In every heaven where Allāh (ﷻ) had a prophet reside, Muhammad (ﷺ) was received with these words: "Welcome, righteous brother!"

❑ Any difference between the prophets is a falsehood concocted by those nations who deviated from the straight path, or, more correctly, by the priests and tricksters who trade in religion. In response to that, Muhammad (ﷺ) openly declared that he was a Prophet sent to complete the building which was started by those who preceded him. He said:

"The likeness of me and the prophets before me is the likeness of a man who built a house and perfected and beautified it except for the placing of one brick in one of its corners. The people began circumambulating it with pleasure and wonder! And they were saying: "Will this brick not be set in place?" I am

that brick and I am the seal of the prophets."[27]

❑ The religions derived from divine revelation are well-known. Not included among them, naturally, are those which the people invented for themselves of idol worship and religious rites such as Hinduism, Budhism, etc. Neither are those cults which have arisen in recent times under the patronage of Western imperialism and which have acquired many supporters in order to strangulate the East and prevent the Muslims from breaking their bondage and rescuing from the slavery of the imperialist. Examples of these are Qadianism and Baha'ism.

❑ It is possible if intentions are sincere and truth is sought that just foundations for religious unity could be set up, and these should be based on respect for common principles and prevention of biased exploitation of the differences until such time as they are eliminated or reduced. Islām, which considers its teachings as a continuation of the early prophecies and as a final brick in its ancient building, will be the first to welcome such a move and support it.

The Pure Nature

On the night of the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* the primary characteristic of this faith was highlighted, that it is the religion of nature. The Ḥadīth is as follows:

"Then I was brought a vessel containing wine and another containing milk. I took the milk and he (that is, the angel) said: "It is the true nature which you and your followers stand for.[28]

The purity of nature is the essence of Islām, and it is impossible for the gates of heaven to be opened for a person whose inner nature is corrupt and whose mind is sick. A corrupt nature is like an eye infected with conjunctivitis which

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[27] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ).

[28] A sound Ḥadīth. It is part of the Ḥadīth reported by Sa'sa ibn Mālik on the *Isrā'*.

discharges impurities as pus. Although these impurities may be hidden under a brightly coloured covering and people may be deceived by it, the Lord of men will never be deceived.

❑ The day when the acts of worship themselves become a screen for an impure nature, they will be considered the lowest grade of wicked sins. The more the mankind advances in civilization the more it indulges in show and hypocrisy and the more it binds itself to strenuous acts of worship and traditions. Most of these affected airs are nothing but curtains which conceal the bright glare of nature and suppress its freshness and purity. There is nothing more hated by Allāh (ﷻ) than that these fetters should be fabricated in the name of religion and that souls should be left imprisoned and miserable in them.

The institution of Prayer

In the *Mi'rāj* the five daily prayers were instituted. They were prescribed in heaven so that they might be a *Mir'āj* which elevated the mankind just as its lusts pulled it down to earth. However, the prayers which Allāh (ﷻ) prescribed are not the prayers performed today by many people. The sign of true prayers is that the performers keep away from despicable things and are ashamed to repeat them. Thus if prayers, which are so often repeated, do not raise those who pray to this level, then they are false prayers. "Prayer is a cleanser,"[29] as the Sunnah says. However it is a cleanser for a living person, not for a putrid corpse. Purification removes the accidental dust which accumulates on the living heart. Those things which frequently affect people in their lives and corrode their minds have even more means to remove them. A

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[29] I am not aware of this wording. Perhaps the author mentioned the meaning. One of the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying in this connection is the following: "What do you think, if there were a stream at the door of one of you and he bathed in it five times a day, would there be any dirt left on him? That is like the five prayers: Allāh (ﷻ) wiped away sins with them." Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), and also by the two of them in the chapter "The actions of Allāh's slaves" on the authority of Jābir (ﷺ).

Ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) is as follows:

"A man's deviations as regards his family, wealth, children, self and neighbours are expiated by fasting, prayers, charity, enjoining good and forbidding evil."[30]

Prayer will help people whose hearts are dead, although they will always remain in existence until their hearts are revived or they are buried in the earth.

❑ Many ḥādīths have been reported which state that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saw on this journey a variety of scenes depicting the rewards of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked. The biographies of the Prophet (ﷺ) convey these wonderful scenes as if they took place during the night of the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj*. The truth is however, that they were seen in a dream on another night which was normal like all the others, as is confirmed in the authentic sources.[31]

The Quraish and the *Isrā'*

On the morning after this famous incident the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) spoke to the people of what happened to him and the greater signs of his Lord which he saw. As for those who denied

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[30] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman.

[31] This is a reference to the Ḥadīth of Samurah ibn Jundub (ﷺ), narrated by Bukhārī in several places of his compilation, and by Aḥmed also in his *Musnad*. However this does not negate the possibility of his having seen some rewards and punishments on the night of the *Isrā'*. In fact, this is as Anas (ﷺ) reports in a Ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ): "When my Lord took me up to the heavens I passed by a people with long claws of tin with which they were scratching their faces and chests. I asked: Who are these, Jibrīl (ﷺ)?' He replied:" These are the ones who used to eat the flesh of men and attack their honour." This is narrated by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd with a sound chain. It is also narrated as *mursal* but *musnad* is more sound. Anas (ﷺ) reports another Ḥadīth about his seeing on the night of the *Isrā'* the orators who do not practice what they preach. Ibn Ḥibbān narrated it in his authentic collection. On this matter there are a number of other Ḥadīths reported by various *Ṣaḥābah*, some of which are mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* of Sūrat *al Isrā'*, and may be used for further reference.

the possibility of Revelation coming to earth: do you think that they would have accepted it happening in heaven? They quickly called one another to gather and listen to this strange wonder and thus strengthen their rejection of him. Some of them challenged him to describe Jerusalem if he had really seen it during the night.

❑ Jābir (ﷺ) reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

"When the Quraish denounced me, I began describing it as I had watched it!"[32]

❑ We do not attach much importance to the way in which the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* took place. The two incidents were realities and they left their impressions on the mind of the Prophet (ﷺ). He became contented with the praises of his Creator and paid less attention to the ravings of the unbelievers and ignorant people. He stepped up his *da'wah* activities with the conviction that every day which passed brought him a step closer to certain victory.

❑ Some writers claim that a group of Muslims apostated after the *Isrā'* and *Mir'āj* because they disbelieved it. Dr Haikal even adds that the Muslims weakened when this tale was spread on everyones lips and the idolaters dismissed its authenticity. This is all a mistake since neither does the historical evidence prove it[33] nor does objective reasoning lead to such a conclusion.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) continued along his old path, warning by Revelation everyone whom he met, joining gatherings with his call, attending the seasonal gatherings, following the pilgrims

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[32] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Ibn Ḥibbān and others. It is supported by a long Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and its chain is sound.

[33] This is refuted by the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbas in the Musnad: "The Prophet (ﷺ) was taken to Jerusalem by night and he was returned the same night. He spoke to them of his journey to Jerusalem and of their caravan. Upon this some people said: 'Shall we believe what Muhammad (ﷺ) says?' They apostated and became unbelievers, and Allāh (ﷻ) struck their necks off with Abū Jahl..., Its chain is good. Also Ibn Kathīr says in his *Tafsīr*: "It is narrated by Al Nasā'ī and its chain is sound. I say: this is only one of the many proofs of one fact that the *Isrā* was in body and soul, a fact to which the respected author does not attach much importance.

into their homes, walking to the market squares of 'Ukkāz, Majnah and Dhul Majāz, all the time inviting the people to discard the idols and listen to the guidance of the Qur'ān. He asked about the homes of every tribe and visited them. Soliciting them to believe in him, follow him and shield him.

❑ However, his uncle, Abū Lahab, would walk behind him, shouting; "Do not obey him. He is an apostate and a liar!"

The reply of the tribes would invariably be: "Your family and relatives know you best! And they would cruelly reject him.

❑ Among the tribes visited by the Prophet (ﷺ) and which rejected him were the following: Fazārah, Ghassān, Murrah, Ḥanīfah, Sulaym, 'Abs, Ba nu al Nadr, Kindah, Kalb, 'Adhrah, Hadarimah, Banū Āmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah, Muḥārib ibn Ḥafṣah, etc. He never found an open heart or a broad mind in any of them. On the contrary, all travellers and residents were advising one another to keep away from him, and they would point him out. A man would return to his tribe from afar and be received by them with these words: "Beware of the man from the Quraish lest he misguide you."

❑ In spite of this and in that suffocating atmosphere, the Prophet (ﷺ) never allowed frustration to befog his mind. He continued patiently in his struggle for the *da'wah* until finally providence announced the coming of relief.

Chapter Four

The Mass Hijrah: Its Causes and Effects

The idolaters of Makkah deprived themselves of all benefit when they rejected the message and sat on the wayside, threatening and debarring the believers from Allāh's way, wishing it were crooked. Even though their false propaganda succeeded in preventing many tribes from entering Islām, the truth had eventually to prevail, and those who were misguided and deceived were to return to it provided that its supporters remained faithful to it, eager to spread it, and were patient and steadfast. Allāh (ﷻ) ordained that a group should arise and rescue Islām from the environment which rejected it, provide it with land and stability after it had experienced isolation and homelessness, and enable it to blaze a trail through life when the huge obstacles had been removed from its path.

❑ This change came about at the hands of delegations which came from Yathrib to Makkah during the pilgrimage season. The people of Yathrib[1] held the distinction over the rest of the Arabs of being neighbours of the Jews and acquainted with the ideology of *tawhīd*. It is possible that the Jews used to converse with them

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[1] I see that the author uses the word Yathrib instead of Al-Madīnah or Ṭibah. Beside this word being of *Jahili* origin, there is a disregard here of Allāh's naming of it as ṭibah, as the Ḥadīth of Jābir ibn Samurah states: "They used to call Madīnah, Yathrib, then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) named it Ṭibah", narrated by Muslim and Al Tayalisi and the wording belongs to the latter. Muslim's wording is: "Allāh (ﷻ) indeed named Al-Madīnah Ṭabah. "Aḥmed narrated it also in both forms. In this connection Bukhārī also narrated ḥādīths from Abū Ḥumayd, Muslim narrated from Zayd ibn Thabit and Aḥmad narrated from Fāṭimah bint Qays, and their chains are all sound.

❑ The best that we can derive from these ḥādīths is that this usage is disliked (*makrūh*) and that the use of Ṭābah or Ṭibah is advisable (*mustaḥabb*). In fact Aḥmad narrated on the authority of Al-Barra ibn 'Azib that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever calls Madīna, *Yathrib*, should ask Allāh (ﷻ) forgiveness: It is Ṭabah, it is Ṭabah," Al Haythami also narrates it on the authority of Abū Y'alā and says that its chain is strong. However, in Aḥmad's chain there is Yazīd ibn Abi Ziyāda, who is weak. If this Hadīth is weak, the previous ones are sufficient evidence. The etiquette (of calling Madīnah by its correct name) was abused by most people so I wanted to draw attention to it.

on matters of religion and deplore their worshipping of idols.

Whenever the controversy raged hot, the Jews would say to them: "God is about to send a Prophet whom we shall follow and we shall help him to destroy you as 'Ad and Iram were destroyed!" The strange thing, however, is that the Jews were the first to disbelieve the Prophet the day he appeared among them, and the Qur'ān decries this contradictory behaviour of theirs.

﴾And when there comes them a Scripture from Allah, confirming that in their possession though before that they were asking for a signal triumph over those who disbelieved and when there comes them that which they know [to be the truth] they disbelieve it.﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 89)

❑ On the other hand, the Arabs, who were threatened with his coming, opened their hearts to him. When the pilgrimage season approached and the tribes of Yathrib arrived in Makkah, they saw the Prophet (ﷺ) inviting the people to Allāh (ﷻ), and some of them said: "O people, by God, you know that this is the one with whom the Jews threaten you. So do not let them precede you to (belief in) him."

❑ The talk of Islām began to spread gradually in Madīnah, and although it was not given a warm welcome, it was, nevertheless, not received with animosity. The elements of hatred and opposition to which it had grown accustomed in Makkah turned into elements of respect and acceptance here. Scarcely three years had passed since the new helpers had heard of Islām then they became its refuge and fortress.

Differences Between the Two Towns

Makkah had lived a life of ease and tranquillity for a long time, assured of its food from all sources. This comfortable state of affairs was due to two factors: (1) the mercantile skill of its people: and (2) the religious status of its sanctuary. Both of these factors attracted benefits to the city and it grew so rich that

it became haughty, and it became so congested that it choked. Then it was overtaken by that which overtakes all societies upon which fortune and wealth smile: pride, hard-heartedness and inflexibility. So when Islām appeared in it and Muhammad (ﷺ) called towards the truth, it rejected him and all those who followed him. Stubbornness possessed it from the first day and it announced that its centre, which was a capital for paganism and idolatry and a focal point for pilgrims, would be lost if people listened to this religion and allowed it to take root.

❑ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) tried his utmost to convince the people of Makkah that their acceptance of the truth would not deprive them one iota of the benefits that they were enjoying. Nevertheless, the oppressors stuck doggedly to disbelief: And they said:

﴾"If we follow the guidance with you, we would be snatched away from our land." Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary [Makkah], to which are brought fruits of all kinds, a provision from Ourselves, but most of them know not.﴿
(Qur'ān 28: 57)

❑ Henceforth the leaders of Makkah were at war with Islām, and they considered it to be the defence of their material and economic well-being besides other factors. The result of these wars is well known.

﴾And how many a town [population] have We destroyed, which was thankless for its means of livelihood [disobeyed Allah, and His Messengers, by doing evil deeds and crimes]! And those are their dwellings, which have not been inhabited after them except a little. And verily! We have been the inheritors.﴿ (Qur'ān 28: 58)

❑ As for the conditions in Yathrib, they were the opposite. Deep rooted enmity between its people had drained their blood, destroyed their unity and made them preoccupied with one another.. The perpetual wars had brought them down to such

depths that the intelligent were grieved and longed for salvation. The Aus and the Khazraj, who were originally of one stock, were suffering under the yoke of this deadly rivalry, so much, so that, their children inherited it from the cradle and grew up to be enemies of one another. The germ of this antagonism was laid by no other than the Jews.

The Jews' Handiwork

The Jews who had settled in Madīnah and its environs had fled to the Arabian peninsula from the persecution of the Christians, who had long tried to Christianize or exterminate them. The reason for this was the Jewish attitude towards Jesus and his mother, and the Christians belief that the Jews had crucified Jesus.

❑ There is no doubt that the Jews are the active people, and wherever they settle, they make great efforts to control the financial sector. Some of them do not mind using cunning and deception to attain their goals. In the Arabian Peninsula they found themselves a minority, and were afraid that if they clashed openly with the Arabs they would be annihilated. They thus resorted to the sowing of enmity between kith and kin. Soon their efforts bore fruit and the Arabs began to destroy one another in a series of wars which had no justification whatsoever. In the meantime the Jews grew stronger, their wealth increased, their fortresses were secured and their influence began to be feared.

❑ A few years before the *Hijra* there occurred a ferocious battle, the battle of Buāth, between the Aus and the Khazraj. The Khazraj had the upper-hand, then the tables were turned and victory favoured the Aus. Both parties were on the verge of annihilating each other when sensible people intervened and advised them to live and let live, for it was better to be the neighbours of their brothers rather than neighbours of the foxes, that is, the Jews.

❑ These tribulations made the people of Madīnah look to Islām with hope when the news of it reached them. Who knew? Perhaps it would give their life new meaning, restore peace among them and raise them spiritually above the Jews.

❑ Ibn Isḥāq reported: When Allāh (ﷻ) wished to make His religion victorious, strengthen His Prophet (ﷺ), and fulfil his promise to him, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) went forth in the pilgrimage season, where he met the group of people from Madīnah. He introduced himself to the Arab tribes, as he would do on every pilgrimage, and while he was at *Al-Aqabah*, he met a group of pilgrims from the Khazraj tribe whom Allāh (ﷻ) wished to benefit. 'Āṣim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatāda (ؓ) spoke to me of what the elders of his tribe said.

❑ "When the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) met them, he said: 'Who are you?'

❑ They replied: 'A group of the Khazraj.'
He said: Clients of the Jews?'
They said, 'Yes.'

He said: 'Won't you sit down and let me talk to you?' They agreed and sat down with him. He then invited them to Allāh (ﷻ), explained Islām to them, and recited the Qur'ān for them."

❑ 'Āṣim continued: "They responded to his call by believing in him, and they accepted what he offered to them of Islām.

They said: "We have left our people behind with so much enmity and evil among them. Perhaps Allāh (ﷻ) will unite them through you. We shall return to them and invite them to your affair, and we shall explain to them this faith which we have accepted from you. If Allāh (ﷻ) unites them under you, then there will be no man dearer to us than you!" Then they returned to their country, having believed and trusted.[2]

❑ This small group was the vanguard of a successful campaign for Islām in Yathrib. Their efforts bore fruit rapidly, and there

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[2] Its chain is good.

remained not a single home which Islām did not enter. When the year elapsed and the season of pilgrimage came around again, twelve men who had accepted Islām left Madīnah with the intention of meeting the Prophet (ﷺ), and strengthening their faith with him. Among them were the six to whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had spoken in the previous season.

The First Pledge of '*Aqabah*

The Prophet (ﷺ) met them at '*Aqabah* and took from them a pledge to believe in Allāh (ﷻ) alone, practise all virtues and keep away from all vices. 'Ubāda ibn Al-Ṣāmit said:

"On the night of the first pledge of '*Aqabah*, we pledged to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) that we will not associate any partners with Allāh (ﷻ), we will not steal, we will not commit adultery, we will not kill our children, we will not make false accusations before our hands and feet, and we will not disobey him in what was right. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said:

"If you fulfil this you will have paradise. However, if you omit any of it and you are punished for it in this world, it is an atonement for you. If you conceal it until the Day of Judgement, then your matter will be left for Allāh (ﷻ) to decide: if He wills, He (ﷻ) will punish you, otherwise He will forgive you."[3]

This is what Muhammad (ﷺ) was demanding and what *jahilīyah* was objecting to. Would anyone detest these pacts except a criminal who wished evil upon the mankind and corruption upon the earth?

❑ The delegation from Madīnah completed this pledge, and then headed for home. The Prophet (ﷺ) thought it best to send along with it one of his trusted men, who would oversee the growth of Islām in Madīnah, teach its inhabitants the Qur'ān, and give them an insight into their religion. His choice fell on Mus'ab Ibn

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[3] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

'Umayr, who was to be their faithful teacher. Mus'ab met with great success in the propagation of Islām among the people. He was able to overcome the difficulties which always confront someone away from home, and at the same time he strove to encourage the people to change from their familiar traditions to a new system, which encompassed the present and the future, and included both faith and action, behaviour and morals.

❑ Do not suppose that Mus'ab was like those mercenary missionaries whom Western imperialism thrusts before itself as it marches on the East. You may see one of them crouching beside the bed of a sick man, saying to him: "This glass the Virgin is offering you and this loaf Christ is presenting to you." Or perhaps one of them will open a school with education as its apparent aim, or a refuge with the sole purpose of charity, then he will direct the entrants to the goal he has in mind. This is a form of spiritual dishonesty which hides behind the title of missionary work, and those who represent this mockery find the courage to do their work from the states which send them. So if you see them determined and persevering, do not forget the powers that support them on land and sea and in the air.

❑ On the other hand, Mus'ab was sent by a persecuted prophet whose message condemned the existing law and who had no material attractions to offer. The equipment that Mus'ab acquired from the Prophet (ﷺ) was the sincerity to Allāh (ﷻ) and the astuteness, and this made him sacrifice his family's wealth and position for the sake of his faith. Then there was this Qur'ān which he took pleasure in reciting, choosing from its gems of wisdom, and with it he confronted people's hearts, which softened and opened up to the new religion.

❑ Mus'ab returned to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) in Makkah a little before the pilgrimage season, and informed him of the warm reception given to Islām in Yathrib. He told him of the large numbers who had entered into Islām out of heartfelt conviction, and who would be represented during the pilgrimage by their delegations sent to meet him.

The Second Pledge of '*Aqabah*

The men who accepted Islām knew, without doubt, of its recent history and the tremendous difficulties with which it was faced. They felt disturbed that their brothers in Makkah should be oppressed and their Prophet (ﷺ) should call to Allāh (ﷻ) and receive no response except from an ungrateful sinner. Thus, they wondered as they left Madīnah for the House of Allāh (ﷻ); how can we leave the Prophet (ﷺ) to be persecuted and terrorized in Makkah? Faith had reached its peak in these young hearts, and the time was fast approaching when they would be able to express their enthusiasm and assist in breaking the suffocating siege, that was laid around the *da'wah* and the Messenger (ﷺ).

❑ Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"Thus seventy men from among us travelled to meet him in the pilgrimage season. We promised to meet him at '*Aqaba*, and so we arrived there in ones and twos until our numbers were complete. We said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), what shall we pledge with you?

He replied: "You shall pledge to hear and obey me in times of activity and inactivity, to spend in ease and hardship, to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, to stand up for Allāh's sake without fear of any reproach, and to aid and protect me when I come to you from all that which you protect your persons, wives and children from, and in return you will have paradise."

❑ So we stood up for to him, and As'ad Ibn Zurārah, who was the youngest of the seventy after me, took his hand and said: "Slowly, people of Yathrib! We did not travel to him without knowing that he is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and to accept him now is a challenge to all the Arabs; it is the killing of your best and clashing with your swords. So either you understand that and accept it and then your reward will be by Allāh (ﷻ), or else you are afraid for your lives, so admit that plainly and it will be your excuse before Allāh (ﷻ)."

❑ They said: As'ad, take your hand away. By Allāh (ﷻ), we shall not abandon this pledge nor shall we retire." So we stood up one by one and took the pledge with him.[4]

❑ Ka'b Ibn Mālik (ﷺ) reported:

We slept that night (the night of '*Aqabah*) with our people in our camp. When a third of the night had passed, we left the camp for the rendez-vous with the Prophet (ﷺ), slipping away like cats and hiding until we were all assembled in the valley near '*Aqabah*. We were seventy-three men and with us were two of our women Naseeba bint Ka'b (ﷺ) and Asma' bint 'Amr ibn 'Adi.

❑ We assembled and waited for the Prophet (ﷺ), and he came accompanied by 'Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, who was still in the religion of the Quraish. Despite this, he had wanted to be present with his nephew and vouch for his integrity. When he sat down, he was the first to speak.

He said: "O people of Yathrib: Muhammad's (ﷺ) status among us is as you know. We have protected him from our people who hold the same opinion about him as we do. He is thus respected among his people and protected in his country. Now he insists on aligning with you and going over to you. If you think that you will be able to fulfil your promise to him and protect him from whoever opposes him, then that is your responsibility! But if you think you are going to betray him and withdraw your support after he has gone over to you, then leave him alone from now on for he is safe in his country."

Ka'b (ﷺ) continued:

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[4] Aḥmad, Al Ḥākim and Al-Bayhaqi narrated it by way of Ibn Khaytham from Abū Zubayr from Jābir. Al Hākim says its chain is sound and Dhahabi agrees with him. Ibn Kathīr says that its chain is good according to Muslim's stipulations. Again, Ibn Ḥajar says: "Aḥmed narrated it with a good chain, and Al Hākim and Ibn Hibbān consider it sound." However, I say there is a weakness in it since the chain has Abū Zubayr in it and he was a forger. Nevertheless, perhaps his narration is considered good or sound because there are other sound narration to the same effect. In any case Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

We said to him: "We have heard what you said, so speak, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and decide for yourself and your Lord whatever you like."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke and recited from the Qur'ān, called to Allāh (ﷻ) and invited us to Islām. Then he said, "I take your pledge that you will protect me from that, which you protect your women and children from."

❑ Then al-Barrā' Ibn Ma'rūr took him by the hand and said: "Yes. By Him who sent you with the truth, we shall protect you from that which we protect our families from. We have made a pledge to you, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and, by Allāh (ﷻ), we are sons of war, having inherited it from our fathers and grandfathers."

❑ Abul Haytham ibn al Tahān then interjected and said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), we have treaties with the Jews and we are going to annul them. Is it possible that if we do so and then Allāh (ﷻ) grants you victory, then perhaps you will return to your people and leave us?"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled, and then said: "No, blood is blood and destruction is destruction. I am one of you and you of me. I fight whom you fight and make peace with whom you make peace with."

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked them to select twelve chiefs (*naqīb*) from among themselves, and they chose nine from the Khazraj and three from the Aus.[5] Then he said to them: "You are the guardians of your people just as the disciples were guardians on behalf of Jesus, son of Mary, and I am a guardian over my people."

That was the pledge of '*Aqabah* with the agreements that were concluded and the discussions that took place.

❑ Surely the spirit of certainty, sacrifice and daring reigned over this gathering and infiltrated every word that was uttered. It was clear that bubbling emotions did not direct conversations or dictate pacts. On the contrary, the account of the future was compared with the account of the present and the expected

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[5] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Isḥāq in his *Maghāzi*. However, the last part "You are the guardians..." is mursal and therefore weak.

liabilities were examined before the supposed gains.

❑ Gains? Where is the talk of gains in this pledge? The whole affair was concluded on the basis of pure self-denial and sacrifices. These seventy men were an ideal example of the spread of Islām by way of free will and personal conviction. They came from Yathrib, full of the firmest faith and responsibility to the call for sacrifice, even though their acquaintance with the Prophet (ﷺ) was only for a fleeting moment, and it was not expected to have lasting effects. We must not forget however, that the source of this active reserve of bravery and confidence was the Qur'ān itself. Although the Anṣār (the people of Madīnah who accepted Islām) had met the Prophet (ﷺ) only occasionally before making pledge with him, It was the resplendent Revelation from heaven which nevertheless lit up their way for them and illuminated their goal.

❑ Almost half of the Qur'ān was Revealed in Makkah, and it flowed from the lips of the *Huffāz* (those who memorized the Qur'ān) and was recorded on scrolls by the honourable scribes. That portion of the Qur'ān revealed in Makkah illustrated the reward of the Hereafter in such vivid, visual terms that one could almost stretch out one's hand and pluck the fruits of Paradise. The bedouin, Arab of the desert, who loved the truth could transport himself in one moment of self-sacrifice from the heat of the Arabian peninsula to the Gardens under which rivers flow and where pure nectar is offered.

❑ The Qur'ān also recounted the history of the early believers: how they were sincere to Allāh (ﷻ) and were saved with their Prophets from destruction. It spoke of the unbelievers of the past: how they transgressed and became complacent when Allāh's punishment did not overtake them. They rebelled further until finally Allāh (ﷻ) meted out justice and swept the oppressors away, leaving behind them a trail of destroyed houses and cities.

❑ This faith in the truth was made by the Prophet (ﷺ) into a catalyst which automatically brought the believers together from all parts of the globe into a strong bond of mutual love and support. Thus the Muslim in Madīnah, although he had not seen his oppressed brother in Makkah, was overflowing with sympathy for him and anger towards his oppressor, and was willing to fight on his behalf. This is what brought the Anṣār from Yathrib, the feelings of love and devotion surging in their hearts, towards the out of sight brothers of faith whom they loved for Allāh's sake.

❑ Abū Mālik al-Ash'ari reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

"O people, hear and understand, and know that Allāh (ﷻ) has servants who are neither prophets nor martyrs, but the prophets and the martyrs envy them for their high status and their closeness to Allah (ﷻ)."

❑ Thereupon a bedouin, who was at a little distance, rose on his knees, to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), a group of people, neither prophets nor martyrs but envied by the prophets and the martyrs for their status and closeness to Allāh (ﷻ)? Describe them to us."

❑ "They are the people from far-off tribes, who are not connected by any close blood relationship, love one another, and have bonded themselves into one rank for Allāh's pleasure. On the Day of Judgement Allāh (ﷻ) will erect pulpits of light for them and they will sit on them. He will make their faces and their clothes shine. The people on the Day of Judgement will be frightened, but not they. They are the friends of Allāh (ﷻ) upon whom no fear shall come nor shall they grieve.[6]

❑ Faith in Allāh (ﷻ), and love for His pleasure, brotherhood in His religion and mutual support in His name. All of this was surging through the minds of those who were gathered there in the darkness

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[6] A good Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad.

of that night near Makkah, still in her reckless rejection of faith. The announcement was about to be made that the Helpers (Anṣār) of Allāh (ﷻ) would defend His Prophet (ﷺ) just as they would defend their honour: they would protect him with their lives and no harm could befall him while they were alive.

❑ The idolaters of Makkah thought that they had enclosed Islām within narrow confines, and had harassed the Muslims so much that they were now preoccupied with themselves. So they went to sleep like a criminal who has committed a crime and feels sure that no one saw him. Indeed, during this night the army of truth swore to one another that they would break the back of paganism once and for all and would wipe *jahilīyah* and its supporters off the face of the earth.

❑ A devil from the idolaters was walking among the pilgrims' tents, and on hearing the noise coming from *Al-Aqabah* close by, he was able to guess what was happening. He shouted a warning to the people of Makkah "Muhammad (ﷺ), and his converts have gathered together to wage war on you!" His voice was loud enough to wake the sleepers. The Muslims realized that their plans for the idolaters had been uncovered, but they showed no concern for the consequences.

Sa'd Ibn 'Ubāda (رضي الله عنه) said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), by Him Who sent you with the truth, if you wish we shall attack the people of Mina tomorrow with our swords." However, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "We were not ordered to do that Return to your camps."

Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) continued his report, saying:

"When the morning came, some of the leaders of the Quraish approached our camps and said: "O Assembly of Khazraj! we were informed that you have come to our man to take him away from our presence and you have pledged with him to wage war on us. By God, there is no Arab settlement with which we should hate to be at war with more than yourselves."

At this some of the idolaters among us got up and swore that, there was nothing of the sort and that they had no knowledge of such a thing. And they were right: they had no knowledge of it. Ka'b (ﷺ) added: We exchanged glances with one another.[7]

❑ However, circumstances proved the rumour to be true, and so the Quraish went after the people from Madīnah but were unable to catch up with them. The only one they caught was Sa'd Ibn 'Ubada, and they brought him back to Makkah in chains, dragging him by the hair and kicking him. However, Jubayr Ibn Mut'im and Al-Ḥaris Ibn Ḥarb rescued him from them, since Sa'd always used to extend to them his protection in Madīnah.

The Beginning of the Hijrah

The success of Islām in founding a homeland of its own in the middle of a desert surging with disbelief and ignorance was its greatest gain since it began to be propagated. The Muslims called to one another from every corner: Come to Yathrib! The Hijrah was not only an escape from persecution and ridicule, it was in fact a movement to establish a new society in a safe country. It became the duty of all able Muslims to assist in the building of this new homeland and to put their utmost efforts into fortifying it and raising its status among other nations. Leaving Madīnah after migration to it

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[7] This is from the Ḥadīth of Ka'b Ibn Mālik (ﷺ) mentioned above. An observation here is that the author related the meaning of the first part of the Ḥadīth and not the words, which are as follows: "And when we took the pledge with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), the devil shouted from the head of '*Aqabah* in the most piercing tone I had ever heard, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This is the devil of '*Aqabah* this is the son of the devil. Listen, enemy of Allāh (ﷻ), by Allāh (ﷻ), I shall soon apply myself to you.' It cannot be understood from this text that "the devil" refers to one of the idolaters nor is it likely that the Prophet (ﷺ) would say to one of them, "Enemy of Allāh (ﷻ), I shall soon apply myself to you."

❑ Our view is supported by the *mursal* Ḥadīth narrated by Al Ṭabarāni on the authority of 'Urwa. In it is this statement: "And the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: 'Let not this voice scare you. It is the enemy of Allāh (ﷻ), *Iblis*. No-one whom you fear has heard him.'..."

became a shirking of responsibility and a betrayal of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) for life. In it was part of faith, since the establishment of the faith depended upon the development of Madīnah.

❑ In the twentieth century the Jews have been proud of themselves and have congratulated one another on being able to find a national homeland of their own after having lived for centuries in exile. We deny not the efforts made by the Jews to establish this state, nor the zeal of the immigrants who came from everywhere to live there and revive and develop the place. Nevertheless, how great is the difference between what the Jews have done in the twentieth century, or, to be more precise, what has been done for the Jews in the twentieth century and what was done by Islām and its children for themselves on the day they migrated to Yathrib, saving their *da'wah* and establishing their state.

❑ The Jews came at a time when the Arabs were divided and in a state of weakness and negligence, and they wove their plots in the field of Western politics which held bitter enmity towards Islām and the Muslims. All of a sudden, the entire world attacked Palestine with wealth, arms, women and cunning. One million Arabs could not do a single thing, confined as they were within tight circles because of the treacherous acts of some. They could find no help from the rest of the world as a result of the agreement concluded by the United Sates, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and... the Arab kings to desert those unfortunate Arabs. In this way a national homeland for the Jews came into existence. There was a campaign to solicit immigrants to it and assistance was given by political leaders and business tycoons in all parts of the globe.

❑ How can we compare this decadence with those personalities whose hearts were dedicated to Allāh (ﷻ) and whose ambitions were above wordly gains; who ignored their own peace and comfort and cared only for those higher ideals in a world teeming with the deaf and dumb. They tied their future to the future of the message which they embraced and whose chief

proponent, they followed in his selflessness and hard struggle, who never tired of repeating:

﴾Say: This is my way: I call on Allāh with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me Glory be to Allāh! And I am not of the idolaters.﴿ (Qur'ān 12: 108)

Surely the Utopia which the philosophers dream of and as described in books is beneath what these early immigrants accomplished. They proved that a mature faith could transform the mankind into a creation competing with the angels in resplendence and purity. The Muslims with the Prophet's (ﷺ) permission hurried from Makkah and other places to Yathrib, motivated by certainty and guided by confidence.

❑ The Hijrah was not an employee's transfer from a nearby town to a distant one, nor was it the wanderings of a person in search of food from a barren land to a fertile one. It was the coercion of a man with deep roots in his native place to give up his personal interests, sacrifice his wealth and flee empty-handed. It was to make him feel that he was a hounded man, whose life and property were not safe, who might be destroyed at the beginning of the path or at the end of it, and that he was moving toward an obscure future not knowing what trials and tribulations were in-store for him. If it was the adventure of a single individual one might have said he was reckless adventurer. On the contrary, however, it affected the length and breadth of the country; men took their wives and children, and at the same time they were content at heart and their faces were bright. It is nothing but faith which moves mountains and is not aimless. But faith in whom? Faith in Allāh (ﷻ), to whom belong the heavens and the earth, and to whom belongs all praise in this world and the Hereafter, and who is the Wise, the Aware. It is only believers who can bear these difficulties. As for the noisy, confused cowards they are unable to withstand any of that, for they are of those about whom Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴾And if We had decreed for them: Lay down your lives or go forth from your dwellings, few of them would have done it.﴿
(Qur'ān 4: 66)

As for those men who rallied around the Prophet (ﷺ) in Makkah, acquired the rays of a guiding light from him and exhorted one another to the truth and perseverance, they hastened, travelling light, as soon as they were told to migrate to where they would strengthen Islām and be assured of its future.

❑ The idolaters looked around, and suddenly in Makkah there were houses once populated with families but now deserted. 'Utba, 'Abbās and Abū Jahl passed by the house of 'Umar Ibn Rabī'ah (ؓ) after it was shut up and the owner had migrated with his wife and brother, Aḥmad, who was a blind man. When 'Utba noticed the wind blowing through the window of this desolate house, he recited: "Every home even though it may remain safe for a long time, will one day be afflicted by disaster and outrage."
Then he said: "This home is now deserted by its owners."

Abū Jahl then said to 'Abbās: "This is your nephew's handiwork: he has divided our people, destroyed our unity and separated us." With this statement Abū Jahl displayed perfectly in himself the attitude of tyrants. They are the ones who commit the crime and put the blame on others: they are the ones who oppress the weak, who if they refuse to be subjected, are then the cause of all the problems!

❑ Among the earliest *muhajirīn* (emigrants) were Abū Salma, his wife and his son.

When they decided on leaving, his in-laws said to him: "So you are determined to go inspite of us? But we shall not let you take our daughter to wherever you want," and they took his wife away from him.

Upon this his relatives became angry and said: "We shall not leave our son with her since you took her away from our brother."

There ensued a tug-of-war for the boy and his arm came out. They took him away and Abū Salma went alone to Madīnah. For a year 'Umm Salma (Abū Salma's wife) wept over her husband and child in Abtah, a place where she would go in the morning and stay till evening, Eventually one of her relatives felt sorry for her and urged her parents to release her. They did so, and she retrieved her son from her in-law and migrated to Madīnah.

❑ When Ṣuhayb wanted to make the Hijrah, the Quraish said to him: "You came to us as a despised pauper, then your wealth grew with us and you attained your present status. Now you wish to go away with all your wealth. By God, that will not be!"

Ṣuhayb replied: "What do you say, if I give you my wealth, will you let me go?" They said yes, and Ṣuhayb showed them where he kept his wealth. When this news reached the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: "Ṣuhayb has profited!"[8]

❑ Thus the *muhajirīn* continued to leave Makkah singly or in small groups until the city was almost emptied of Muslims. The Quraish began to feel that Islām had now acquired a home and a protective fortress, and they became apprehensive of the consequences of this dangerous stage in Muhammad's (ﷺ) *da'wah*. In their vein flowed the instincts of a beast of prey when it is cornered. Although Muhammad (ﷺ) was still in Makkah, he would no doubt soon join his Companions that day or the next, so they had to hurry and catch him before he slipped out of reach.

In the Council Chamber

The tyrants of Makkah assembled in the Council Chamber to come to a firm decision on the matter. Some opined that Muhammad (ﷺ) should be put in chains, thrown into prison and kept in solitary confinement, although he should be given food until he died. Others thought that, he should be expelled

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[8] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Ḥishām as mursal. Al-Ḥākim supplied the links and said it was sound according to the requirements of Muslim. It is supported by a similar Ḥadīth from Ṣuhayb himself.

from Makkah and never allowed to re-enter it thus the Quraish would have washed their hands of him.

❑ Both of these views were rejected, because they were not feasible. The decision reached was the view proposed by Abū Jahl that every clan should select a sound, strong young man from among themselves and they should all stab Muhammad (ﷺ) in one attack. In this way the Banū Ḥashim would not be able to take revenge on the Quraish since, all of the clans would be implicated, and if they asked for blood money this could be paid. The conspirators agreed on this solution to the problem which had baffled them, and dispersed to execute it. The Qur'ān referred to this plot when it said:

﴾**And when those who disbelieve plot against you [Muhammad] to put you infatally, or to kill you or to drive you out; they plot, but Allāh [also] plots; Allāh is the best of plotters.**﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 30)

❑ This decision was not taken in a secret meeting but in a general assembly so it was natural that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) should hear about it and know the reality of his position in Makkah. They were only waiting for the appointed time to execute their plot, and there would be food beforehand as an offering to the idols! In any case the Prophet (ﷺ) would not suggest to his Companions to migrate and not do so himself. He had planned his journey to Yathrib ever since he had urged the Muslims to migrate there. Al Zuhri narrated from 'Urwa who narrated from 'Ā'ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to the Muslims while still in Makkah: "I was shown the home of your migration: I was shown a marshy-land and full of date palms between two mountains."[9]

Thus began the Hijrah of the Muslims to Madīnah, and those, who had migrated to Abyssinia returned and migrated to Madīnah.[10]

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[9] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Al-Hākim and Al-Bayhaqī on the authority of 'Ā'ishah, and by Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Mājah on the authority of Abū Mūsa.

[10] They began to return, and this continued until the year of the Hijrah.

The Hijrah of the Prophet (ﷺ)

When the Prophet (ﷺ) decided to leave Makkah for Madīnah, the following prayer was Revealed to him:

﴾And say: My Lord! Cause me to come in with a firm entrance and to go out with a firm exit. And give me from your Presence a sustaining power.﴿ (Qur'ān 17: 80)[11]

No-other human being is known, who is more deserving of Allāh's (ﷻ) help than the Prophet (ﷺ), who met with all sorts of afflictions in His (ﷻ) cause. Nevertheless, his deserving of Allāh's aid does not mean that, he was negligent in the slightest of cause and effect. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), accordingly made secure the route of his migration and prepared a plan for every contingency. In his calculations he did not leave anything to chance. It is the nature of believers to take all the normal causes and effects into considerations if there were everything needed for success. Then they place themselves in Allāh's hands, because nothing can take place except by His will.

❑ Thus if people make all possible effort and fulfils their duties, but fail after that, then Allāh (ﷻ) will not blame them. For a defeat over which they had no control. However, this rarely happens unless it is totally beyond their capacity. It often happens that a person does all that is necessary for success and help comes from above, making this success produce double the expected fruit. It is like a ship steered by an experienced captain and also assisted by

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[11] This is from the Hadīth of Ibn 'Abbās, who said "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was in Makkah, then he was ordered to migrate and this *ayah* was Revealed to him. It is narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Al'Ḥākim, Al Bayhaqī and Aḥmad by way of Qābūs ibn Abū Zibyan from his father from Ibn Abbās. However, Aḥmad's and Al-Bayhaqī's chain does not contain "from his father." Al Tirmidhī said it was a good, sound Ḥadīth, and Al-Ḥākim said, "Its chain is sound and Al Dhahabi has authenticated it."

There is doubt in this statement since Al-Dhahabi has mentioned Abū Zibyan in his *Al Mizan*, and has reported that Ibn Ḥibbān, says about him: He has a bad memory. He reports things from his father which have no basis. Sometimes he would report as *marfū'* what is mursal and as musnad what is *mauqūf*."

favourable winds and current, thereby reaching its destination in less than the appointed time.

❑ The migration of the Prophet (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madīnah was of this nature. He asked Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and 'Alī (ﷺ) to remain with him, and gave permission to all the other Muslims to precede him to Madīnah. Abū Bakr (ﷺ) had come to him, asking for permission to leave, and the Prophet (ﷺ) had replied: "Do not hurry. Perhaps Allāh (ﷻ) give you a Companion."[12]

Abū Bakr (ﷺ) felt as if the Prophet meant himself by this statement. He therefore bought two mounts and kept them at home, feeding them in preparation for this event.

❑ As regards 'Alī (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) had prepared him for a special role which he would have to play in this risky adventure. Ibn Isḥāq said:

Someone with whom I find no fault reported to me on the authority of 'Urwa Ibn Al Zubayr who reported that 'Ā'ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, said: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) never failed to come to Abū Bakr's (ﷺ) house once a day, either in the morning or in the evening. Then came the day when Allāh (ﷻ) gave his Messenger the permission to migrate from Makkah and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) came to us at midday at a time when he never used to come. When Abū Bakr (ﷺ) saw him he said: The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has come at this hour only because some important event has taken place. When he entered, Abū Bakr (ﷺ) stepped back from his bed and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) sat down. There was no-one else present except my sister Asma' and I.

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

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[12] Narrated by Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. However, its meaning is to be found in the long Ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah on the Hijrah narrated by Bukhārī. The words are: "And Abū Bakr (ﷺ) prepared himself to go to Madīnah and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, 'Take your time for I hope that I shall be given permission.' Abū Bakr said: shall we hope for that ? May my father be sacrificed for you? He said yes, so Abū Bakr (ﷺ) stayed behind so as to accompany the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and he groomed two mounts for four months with the leaves of *Samr*." This is also narrated by Aḥmad.

"Let those who are with you leave my presence."

Abū Bakr (ﷺ) replied: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), they are my daughters. What is it? May my father and mother be your ransom."

He Said: "Allāh (ﷻ) has ordered me to leave and migrate."

❑ Abū Bakr (ﷺ) said: "Companionship, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?"

He said: "Companionship."

Ā'ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, continued: "And, by Allāh (ﷻ), I had never before witnessed anybody crying for joy until I saw Abū Bakr (ﷺ) crying for joy on that day."

Abū Bakr (ﷺ) then said: "Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ), I have groomed these two mounts for this."

So they hired 'Abdullāh Ibn Urayqit who was still an idolater to be their guide to Madīnah. They entrusted him with the two mounts and he kept them and groomed them until the appointed time.[13]

Ibn Isḥāq continued:

"No one knew of the Prophet's (ﷺ) departure from what I heard, except 'Alī (ﷺ), Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and his family. As regards 'Alī (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered him to stay behind, so that he could return the trusts that he was keeping for the people." There was no-one in Makkah who possessed something precious and did not give it to the Prophet (ﷺ) for safekeeping, because of what they knew of his truthfulness and trustworthiness.

A Lesson in Diplomacy

It should be noted that the Prophet (ﷺ) hid the secrets of his journey and disclosed them only to those with whom he had strong ties. Even so, he did not explain to them in detail except where it

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[13] Ibn Isḥāq narrated it from his Sheikh, whom he did not name. However, Ibn Ḥarir named him in a report from Ibn Isḥāq as Muhammad Ibn Abdul Rahmān Al- Tamīmī. This Sheikh is not well-known others also narrated this Hadīth, e.g. Ibn Jarīr with a sound chain, Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

was necessary for them to take action. He hired a guide who was intimately acquainted with the desert to make use of his experience in enabling them to escape the pursuers. For this purpose he looked at the person's competence alone, and even though he was an idolater, the Prophet (ﷺ) still made use of his skill.

Together with this flexibility in his plan, the Prophet (ﷺ) also insisted on paying for his mount and refused to accept it free from Abū Bakr (ﷺ). Spending on this Hijrah was a form of worship which one should be keen to observe and for which there was no deputizing.

The Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (ﷺ) came to an agreement on the details of the departure. They chose the cave in which they would hide, deciding on one in the south in the direction of Yemen so as to fool the pursuers. They then selected the individuals with whom they would need to have contact while in the cave and assigned each one his duty.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) then returned home to find that the Quraish had begun to surround it and had sent the youths who were given the responsibility of assassinating him. He instructed 'Alī to put on the cloak in which he [the Prophet (ﷺ)] normally slept in and to lie down on his bed. In the quiet of the night and unknown to the watchers, the Prophet (ﷺ) slipped out of his house and went to Abū Bakr's (ﷺ) home. From there they left by way of a back entrance and headed for the cave of Thawr, the cave in which Providence entrusted the future of the last Message and the destiny of a perfect civilization. There it was left to be guarded by silence, eerieness and loneliness.

In the Cave

The events unrolled as they planned. Abū Bakr (ﷺ) had ordered his son 'Abdullāh to listen to what the people said about them, then report to them in the cave when he came in the evening. He had ordered 'Āmir ibn Fuhayra, his slave, to graze

his sheep during the day and bring them to the cave in the evening. Thus 'Abdullāh would listen to the Quraish and in the evening he would recount it all to the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (ﷺ). Meantime, 'Āmir grazed his sheep with the other shepherds during the day, and brought his sheep to the cave in the evening for the two of them to milk and slaughter. When 'Abdullāh left to go back to Makkah, 'Āmir would follow him and wipe out all their traces with the sheep.

❑ This was the utmost precaution that could be taken, as necessity imposes on any one. The idolaters of Makkah followed the emigrants, keeping a careful eye on all the roads and investigating every refuge. They searched the hills of Makkah and its caves until they arrived quite close to the cave of Thawr. The Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (ﷺ) listened to their footsteps near the mouth of the cave. Abū Bakr (ﷺ) felt a tremor and he whispered to the Prophet (ﷺ): "If one of them looked down under his feet he would see us."

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "Abū Bakr (ﷺ), what is this thought of two. The third among us is Allāh (ﷻ)."[14]

❑ The pursuers apparently became frustrated at not finding them in the vicinity, and they mounted their horses to return home. Aḥmad narrated:

"The idolaters followed the trail until they arrived at the mountain, Mount Thawr; then they were thrown into confusion. They climbed the mountain and passed by the cave. Over its mouth they saw a spider's web, so they said: "If anyone had had entered here, there would be no web over the entrance."

They spent three nights in the cave.

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[14] The chain contains 'Uthmān Al-Jazari which the author said is good. Apparently he has followed Ibn Kathīr in this just as Ibn Ḥajar did in his book *Fath al Bāri*. But there is doubt about this since 'Uthmān al-Jazari "is not to be followed in his Ḥadīth," as Al-Aqili says. For this reason Ibn Ḥajar says in his book Al Taqrīb, "There is a weakness in him. It is not strengthened either by the Ḥadīth mentioned by Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Ḥajar on the authority of Ḥasan Al-Baṣri, because this Ḥadīth, apart from being mursal, contains Bishār al Khaffāf Ibn Mūsā, who is not trustworthy, as Ibn Mu'in, Al Nasā'ī and others say.

Aḥmad's narration is good, even though the authentic books of the Sunnah do not report the same story and even though there is no mention of doves who laid eggs near the entrance of the cave, or other incidents.

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) mentions the Hijrah thus:

﴾Although you did not help him, still Allāh helped him when those who disbelieve drove him out, the second of two; when they were both in the cave, when he said to his comrade "Do not grieve. Look Allāh is with us. Then Allāh caused His peace of reassurance to descend upon him and supported him with hosts you cannot see, and made the world of those who disbelieved the nethermost, while Allāh's word was that which became the uppermost. Allāh is Mighty, Wise.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 40)

❑ The hosts which defeat falsehood and help truth to gain victory are not restricted to a particular kind of weapon or miracle. They are more general than to be either material or spiritual. Even if they are material, their importance has nothing to do with their size. A single virus, invisible to the naked eye, could destroy a strong army:

﴾None knows the hosts of your Lord, save Him.﴿ (Qur'ān 74: 31)

❑ It was Allāh's action on behalf of His Prophet (ﷺ) that the enemies' eyes should be blind to him even though he was within arm's reach. This was not favouritism from Allāh (ﷻ) towards a people who had neglected to prepare all the means of escape. It was in fact a reward from Him for those who had taken every single precaution possible. How many plans have been drawn up to the best of the planners' ability, yet they pass through trying periods for reasons beyond their will or their consideration, and finally things settle down according to the dictates of Divine Wisdom and within the limits of Allāh's words:

﴾And Allāh was predominant in His affair, but most of mankind was unaware of it.﴿ (Qur'ān 12: 21)

On the Way to Madīnah

Three nights had passed since the Prophet (ﷺ) had taken shelter in the cave. The idolaters had lost their zeal to look further, so the two emigrants prepared to resume their hard journey. 'Abdullāh Ibn Urayqit came at the appointed time with the mounts which he had groomed for long journey. The travellers loaded up with provisions and set out in the name of Allāh (ﷻ). However, the Quraish were angry at their failure to bring back Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companion, and so they set the blood money for each of the two as a prize for anyone who brought them back dead or alive. Two hundred or even one hundred camels in the desert were tempting enough for anyone to undergo difficulties and take risks.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) estimated that the pursuers would spare no effort to catch him, so he kept on the safe side throughout the journey. He was helped in this by the skill of the guide, who was able to take them along routes which the caravans did not normally use. Then they let the mounts go at full speed.

❑ When they (the Makkans) passed by the district of Madhlaj a man saw them and said: "I have just seen some silhouettes on the coast and I think they are no other than Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companion." Upon this, the idea of gaining the prize all for himself flashed through the mind of Surāqa Ibn Mālik and he said: "No, they are so and so who have gone out on some errand of their own."

He waited a little, then he got up and entered his tent, saying to his servant: "Lead the mare out from behind the tent and I'll meet you behind the hillock."

Surāqa himself described the incident:

"I took my spear and left from the back of the tent, drawing a line on the ground with its point. When I reached my mare I mounted her and spurred her on. She carried me rapidly until I was quite close to them, but my mare stumbled and I fell of her. I got up…"

Surāqa mounted his mare once again and spurred her on until he came close to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companion. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) was turning around frequently to see if he could recognize this daring pursuer, and as he came close Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) did recognize him.

He said to the Prophet (ﷺ), both of them bent on reaching their destination: "That is Surāqa Ibn Mālik chasing us!" He had hardly finished this statement when the mare stumbled again, throwing Surāqa off her back. He got up covered with dust and calling for an amnesty! It occurred to Surāqa that the Messenger (ﷺ) was genuine, so he apologized to him and asked him to pray to Allāh (ﷻ) for him.

He offered them his provisions, but they said: "We do not need them. However, you can cover our tracks for us."[15]

❑ He agreed to this and turned back. Along the way he found the people still intent on their search, so whenever he met anyone he tried to dissuade him from pursuit, saying: "This road has already been checked." In the morning he was keen to seek them out, and in the evening he was covering up their tracks!

Supplication

Desert travel wears out the strongest people who have no fear for their safety, so what about those who are being pursued and are fearful for their lives? Only one who has experienced it, can understand their circumstances. One day we went out into the heat of the noonday sun and were almost blinded by its white rays reflecting off the sand. So we hurried back, shielding our eyes for fear of being blinded. However, when you spend all day long among never-ending hills and valleys, you begin to see the world covered with dust and dark. Travellers have developed the habit of taking a siesta under any shade, and in low lying lands

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[15] Up to here is narrated by Bukhārī and Al Ḥākim. The rest of the incident apart from the last line is narrated by Muslim. The last but one line is narrated by Muslim. The last line is narrated by both Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

where everything casts a shadow on them when the sun is in deadline, the languid travellers stir themselves to face the dehydration and sleepiness.

❑ The Arabs had the strength to these hardships inspite of the lack of provisions and water. You have already seen that the Prophet (ﷺ), while still a child, had undertaken the same journey with his mother to visit his father's grave and had returned alone. Now he was undertaking it again at the age of 53, not for the purpose of visiting the graves of his parents, who had died in Madīnah, but for the preservation of his message, whose roots had taken a firm hold on the soil of Yathrib after having been rejected by Makkah.

❑ He was the staunchest of all people in certainty that Allāh (ﷻ) would help him and cause His faith to triumph. Nevertheless, he was still grieved at the harsh reception given to the faith and the stubbornness which he had encountered from the beginning of his mission until he was forced to migrate under these trying circumstances. Here he was, being chased out of Makkah, and its leaders announcing generous rewards for anyone who could kill him.

❑ Abū Na'im narrates that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) made the following supplication when he left Makkah and migrated to Madīnah:

"Praise be to Allāh (ﷻ), who created me, though I was nothing. O Allāh (ﷻ), help me bear the might of the word, the vicissitudes of time and the calamities of the nights and days. O Allāh (ﷻ), accompany me on my journey, and replace me in my family, and bless me in what you have provided me. To you I am humble, and in my good character keep me steadfast. Make me, O Lord, beloved to Yourself, and do not leave me to the people. You are the Lord of the oppressed and my Lord. I seek refuge in Your noble countenance by which the heavens and the earth were illuminated, by which the darkness was dispelled, and on which the affairs of the first and the last (of the mankind) were put in

order. I seek refuge from Your anger befalling me and Your displeasure overtaking me. I seek refuge in you from the withdrawal of Your bounty and the suddenness of Your vengeance, from the removal of Your blessings and the coming of Your wrath. And there is no power or might save in you."

❑ It is noteworthy that the news of the Prophet's (ﷺ) departure from Makkah spread to every part of the desert. It was, as if, the telegraph wires had taken the news to the farthest corners, and both bedouin and town-dwellers all along the way as far as Yathrib had come to hear it. In fact, Makkah heard about the places through which the Prophet (ﷺ) passed, soon after he departed from them. Men usually enjoy stories of heroism and are excited by all sorts of challenges. They quickly pass on hot news by word of mouth and clothe it with an aura of legend. Many hearts were outstrip with Muhammad (ﷺ) in his bid to his pursuers, and their sentiments were translated into a piece of poetry which was sung everywhere yet its composer was not known!

❑ Such was the case as described by Asmā' bint Abi Bakr. She said: "We spent three nights not knowing where the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had gone until a man came from lower Makkah, singing some couplets of poetry:

"May Allāh (ﷻ), the Lord of mankind, shower His choicest blessings on two Companions who visited the tents of Umm Ma'bad. They stayed in the area and then travelled on. And successful is he who becomes Muhammad's (ﷺ) Companion." Asmā continued: "When we heard this we realized which direction the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had taken: he was heading for Madīna."[16]

❑ Who was the reciter? The narration says that he was a jinn, and that was the custom of the Arabs in ascribing their poetry: in their

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[16] Its isnād is mixed up. Ibn Isḥāq says in his *Sīrah*: "Asmā' bint Abū Bakr said: 'Three nights passed and we did not know in which direction the Prophet (ﷺ) was heading until a jinn came from lower Makkah, singing verses from the poetry of Arab songs. The people followed him, hearing his voice but not seeing him, until he left from upper Makkah He was saying ..." and she mentioned the verses.

eyes every poet had a devil.[17] It is probable that these couplets were composed by a secret believer at Makkah, who was on the lookout for news of the emigrants. He thus declared his joy at the success they were making and found a way to express his hidden feelings by means of this fluent poetry. These couplets refer to an event that took place during the Prophet's (ﷺ) journey. He had passed by the dwellings of Khuza'ah where he had entered the tent of Umm Ma'bad, rested for a while and drunk milk from her goat.

Arrival at Madīnah

Similarly the news of the great traveller and his Companion had reached Madīnah. Its inhabitants would come out every morning and scan the horizon for signs of his approach and when the sun became too hot they would return to their houses with hopes and fear for the morrow. On 12 Rabi'i in the thirteenth year of the call, the *Anṣār*, as usual, went outside Madīnah to look for the Prophet (ﷺ). As noon approached and the heat became intense, they began to despair and were about to return to their homes when one of the Jews, who had climbed up a hillock for his own reasons, saw a cloud of dust approaching the city.

He shouted at the top of his voice, saying: "O Banu Oaylah! There is your man now arriving! There is your grandfather

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[17] Let me (i.e Nāsiruddīn) say: If the Arabs had permitted themselves to say this in *Jahilīyah*, was it permissible to them as Muslims? Allāh (ﷻ) had rid their hearts of fancies. Is it permissible to say of Asmā' that she called a believer "*Jinn*" or "Shaytan"? What is the need for the author to resort to such farfetched interpretations? Do you not see in the narration of the previous note that the people were following his voice but could not see him? Is this the case of a human being? It would be better for the author to ignore this narration entirely rather than interpret it in this manner. Especially since it is weak.

❑ I found this Ḥadīth narrated as *Mursal* by Al-Ḥākim on the authority of Hishām Ibn Ḥabīsh, and he said it had a sound chain. However, there is doubt about this. Al Haythami said: Al Ṭabarāni narrated it but his chain contained a number of men whom I do not know." The Ḥadīth has two other sources which are mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in his *Al Bidāyah*. Thus with its various sources the Ḥadīth is no less than *ḥasan* (Good).

whom you are awaiting!" The Anṣār hurried to take up arms and greet their Prophet (ﷺ) with the sound of "*Allahu Akbar*" echoing in every corner of Madīnah. Yathrib took on the appearance of a festival with all its exuberance.

❑ Al-Barra' (ﷺ) said:

"The first Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) to reach us were Mus'ab Ibn 'Umayr (ﷺ) and the son of Umm Maktūm, they began to teach the people the Qur'ān. Next came 'Ammar (ﷺ), Bilāl (ﷺ) and Sa'd (ﷺ), then 'Umar ibn-ul Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ) in a group of twenty riders. Then came the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and I have never seen the people more overjoyed with anything than they were overjoyed with his coming. I even saw the women, children and slave girls saying: "Here is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) who has arrived."[18]

❑ How strange are the contrasts in life and the difference among people! The one whom Makkah sought but failed to kill is warmly received by Madīnah, and its citizens offer him protection, arms and numerous supporters. One noteworthy point was that most of the people of Madīnah had never seen the Prophet (ﷺ) before. So when he arrived they could not at first distinguish him from Abū Bakr (ﷺ), and the women who were watching him from the rooftops were saying: "Which one of them is he?"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) stayed as the guest of Banu 'Āmir Ibn 'Auf for fourteen nights, during which he laid the foundations for the Quba Mosque, the first mosque ever to be built in Islām. Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following āyah (verse) about it:

﴾A place of worship which was founded upon duty [to Allāh] from the first day is more worthy that you should stand [to pray] in it, in which are men who love to purify themselves.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 108)

[18] A *Ṣaḥīḥ* Hadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Al Tayālisi.

Settling Down in Madīnah

A man of faith acts in accordance with it and finds tranquillity wherever it resolves that there should be reception and wider scope for the *dāwah*. People seek happiness in those things to which their minds cling and for which they yearn. They look at the world and they share in it the light of the feelings and thoughts deep down inside them. Thus a seeker after leadership will be content or displeased, will be active or idle in proportion to his closeness to or distance from his beloved target.

❑ Look at Al-Mutanabbi: how much he eulogized and satirized; how he travelled from Syria to Egyt and from Egypt to other places; and look at what he said of others talking about him and his desires: "They ask me, what are you? In every town, and what do you want? What I want is too great to be named." What was too great to name he did mention clearly everywhere else: he asked to be given charge of an estate or a province! In other words, some of that which luck had placed in the hands of kings and masters. And he even sought to fulfil his desire quickly by asking *Kafūr*: "Abul Misk, is there anything left in the cup that I can have? I shall become rich in a short while, and then you will drink."

❑ Al Mutanabbi, in my opinion, was quite capable of being in a high post because of his qualifications. Nevertheless, aspiration for worldly things with such haste and insistence is indicated by Allāh's (ﷻ) will as mentioned in the following āyah (verse):

﴾Who-ever desires that [life] which hastens away, We hasten for him therein what We will for whom We please.﴿ (Qur'ān 17: 18)

❑ Then there are those men who worship beauty and pursue women, who find satisfaction in being in their company, and afterwards feel at ease and humbled. They say: "I do not see the world by the light of the morning; I see the world by the light of the eye."

❑ Then there is the one who pursues wealth, and spends most of the day and half of the night checking the figures in his cash book, counting what is in his hand and estimating what is not there yet. He may even neglect his clothes and food in following his instinct to possess, which has blinded him to everything else.

❑ Along with these classes of men you will find another group of people who cannot bear to give up rendering services, giving advice, looking after public welfare and sacrificing themselves to show those virtues which have totally possessed their hearts. They spend sleepless nights wondering whether they have failed to perform their duty. Their greatest source of comfort is their search for perfection and their utmost happiness lies in the day they are able to achieve it. Those people with great missions are pledged to carry out the responsibilities and trusts they have undertaken. Their earnings and their debts, their dwellings and their travels, their friendship and their enmity, all go back to the ideals with which they have identified themselves and for which they live.

❑ The man who had the greatest mission to fulfil, Muhammad (ﷺ) Ibn 'Abdullāh, made of himself a rare ideal for strivers. Ever since he had taken upon his shoulders the task of stripping away the darkness which had spread a thick blanket of idolatry and superstition over the world, nobody had succeeded in turning him away from his determination or blocking his path or swaying him by enticements or deterring him by threats. The differences of time and space all vanished before his eyes, for the person who was estranged from him became very close when he accepted the truth, his homeland when it rejected the guidance he rejected it, and those who believe in him until the end of time are his brothers even though they have never seen him.

❑ He had spent 53 years of his life in Makkah until it knew him well, but that day he left it for a new land in which he saw the fulfilment of his heart's desire and the fruits of what he had sown. People whose happiness springs from their hearts, and who are conscientiously committed to their principles, do not

revere an environment for itself but for the principles which they see reflected in it. It is small wonder, therefore, that Muhammad (ﷺ) should enter Madīnah with emotion and pride, happy at the victory that Allāh (ﷻ) had granted him and seeing the signs of further victory and prosperity.

❑ A poet from Madīnah said: He had lived with the Quraish for about ten years, wondering if he would ever meet a friend or a pleasant man. He spoke to the pilgrims from afar, yet saw no-one to give him shelter or understand. So when he came to us and his mind was made up, being joyful and pleased at Taybah (Madīnah), and the tyrant far away no longer fearing his will, and he not fearing a rebel from the mankind, we sacrificed our lawful wealth for him and ourselves in times of war and peace. We became foes of his enemies, all of them, even though they had been our bosom friends, and we knew that there was no Lord save Allāh (ﷻ), and the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) was our only guide.

❑ The organizing of a Hijrah and the reception of the refugees fleeing with their faith from various directions are not easy tasks. In our times such a condition is considered an emergency which needs an immediate solution.

❑ When is the life of a great man ever free from emergencies? It so happened that at the time of the Hijrah Madīnah was suffering from an epidemic of malaria. In just a few days Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and Bilāl (رضي الله عنه) fell ill, and the *Ṣaḥaba* began to feel upset by the atmosphere of the place which had given them refuge. Soon the feelings of homesickness began to stir in them.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) had always urged his Companions to bear hardships and make a greater effort and sacrifice for the cause of Islām. On this occasion he said: "Anyone of my *Ummah* who endures the harshness of Madīnah will have me as his intercessor and witness on the Day of Resurrection, for it will be replaced in it by someone who is better than he."[19]

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[19] Ṣaḥīḥ: narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad on the authority of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqās with an inversion of the sentences. Al Bazzār narrated it on the authority of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) as quoted above, and Al Haythami said its chain was *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

This was his method of uniting the hearts towards Madīnah so that they might feel love for it, and hate to leave it.

'Ā'ishah, May Allāh be pleased with her, reported: "When the Prophet (ﷺ), on whom be peace, arrived at Madīnah, Abū Bakr (ؓ) and Bilāl (ؓ) contracted fever. I visited them and said: "Father, how are you? And Bilāl (ؓ), how are you?"

❑ Whenever the fever attacked Abū Bakr (ؓ) he would say in a couplet: "Every man who awakes in the morning among his family finds that death is closer to him than his shoelace." And Bilāl (ؓ), too, would recite some couplets of poetry when the fever eased.

❑ 'Ā'ishah said: "I informed the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) of this, and he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), make Madīnah as beloved to us as Makkah or even more so. O Allāh (ﷻ), make it a good place and bless us in its weights and measures and take away its fever and make it free from illness."

❑ Anas (ؓ) reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), put in Madīnah double the blessings you put in Makkah."

❑ Abū Hurairah (ؓ) reported: "Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) was brought the first crop of fruit, he would say: 'O Allāh (ﷻ) bless us in our Madīnah and our fruits, in our weights and our measures, blessings upon blessings. O Allāh (ﷻ), Ibrahim (ؑ) was Your servant, prophet and friend, and I am your servant and prophet. He called you to Makkah, and I am calling you to Madīnah with the like of what he called you to Makkah and double that." Then he would give it to the youngest of the children present.[20]

❑ With this encouragement and concern, the morale of the Muslims rose high, youthful energies were directed into building and the past was forgotten. A pure Hijrah does not take back its

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[20] *Saḥīḥ*: narrated by Muslim.

gift or recall its sacrifice or cry over what is already done. Instead, it is as the poet says: "When my mind is removed from a thing, I hardly ever look at it again until the end of time."

Chapter Five

The Foundations of the New Society

The Islāmic *Ummah* is not a group of people whose aim is to live in any manner and head in any direction so long as they have enough food and amusement. On the contrary, Muslims possess an ideology which defines their relationship with Allāh (ﷻ) clarifies their vision of life, organizes their affair internally according to specific patterns and leads their external connections towards definite goals. There is a great difference between a person who says to you: "My only concern in this world is to live my life, and another who says: "If I do not protect my honour, safeguard my rights, please Allāh (ﷻ) and defend His cause, then may my legs not carry me and my eyes not guide me."

❑ The *Muhajirīn* to Madīnah did not forsake their homeland out of desire for wealth or dominion. The Anṣār, who welcomed them, swore enmity to their own people and made their lands targets for all the Arabs, did not do so in order to live in any manner as chance would have it. All of them had the desire to be guided by Revelation, gain the pleasure of Allāh (ﷻ) and realize the ultimate goal, for which humans were created and life was established. Can those who deny their Lord and yield to their lusts by anything other than despicable creatures or accursed devils?

❑ From this point of view the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), immediately after settling down in Madīnah, turned his attention to the laying of those foundations which were necessary for the fulfilment of his mission. The basic priorities were as follows:

(1) The relationship of the *Ummah* with Allāh (ﷻ);

(2) The relationship of the members of the *Ummah* with one another; and

(3) The relationship of the *Ummah* with non-Muslims.

The Mosque

Concerning the first item, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) hastened to build the mosque in which the rites of Islām, which had long been suppressed, could be practised, and in which the prayers could be established, drawing people closer to their Lord and purifying hearts from the filth of the earth and the schemes of worldly life.

❑ According to the report the Prophet (ﷺ) built his mosque where his camel knelt down, in an empty lot belonging to two orphans under the care of As'ad Ibn Zurārah. Although the two boys wished to donate the land for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ), the Prophet (ﷺ) insisted on paying the full price for it. This land, before being developed for a mosque like the mosques which abound in the Saudi Arabian countryside, was once covered with date palms and seeding trees, and had a few tombs belonging to idolaters.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the palms to be cut down and the tombs to be levelled.[1] The palms were arranged to mark out the *qibla* of the mosque,[2] which was Jerusalem in those days. The length of the mosque from the *qibla* to the back wall was 100 *dhirā'*[3] and the two sides were approximately of the same length. The sides were made of stones and the foundations were dug 3 *dhirā'* deep and built of bricks. The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions joined together in fetching the bricks and stones on their shoulders and they would cheer themselves up by singing: "O Allāh (ﷻ), there is no life except the life of the Hereafter, So forgive the Anṣār and the *muhajirīn*!" The Companions (*Ṣaḥaba)* became more enthused with the spirit to work when they saw the Prophet (ﷺ) himself toiling like any of them and disliking to

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[1] They were tombs which had started to collapse and were abandoned, nobody being buried there.

[2] This is narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim as well as others on the authority of Anas (ﷺ).

[3] A *dhirā'* is equivalent to a cubit, an ancient linear measure equal to the length of a forearm.

show himself superior to any of them. One of them sang this couplet: "If we sat down while the Messenger was working, that would be a misguided deed on our part."

❑ The mosque was completed in all simplicity: its flooring was sand and pebbles, its ceiling palm branches and its pillars the trunks of trees. Perhaps when rain fell the ground would become muddy, and perhaps the dogs were able to pass in and out of the walls.

❑ This simple, humble building nurtured the angels from among people, the educators of mighty personalities and the monarchs of the Hereafter. In this mosque Allāh (ﷻ) gave permission to his Prophet (ﷺ) to train the choicest of those who believed in him, and mould them with the discipline of heaven from early morning until the darkness of the night. The status of the mosque in Islāmic society is unique. It is an institution. It is the source of spiritual and material guidance, it is the hall for worship, the school for knowledge and the centre for literary pursuits. Strongly attached to the duty of prayers and the rows of worshippers are moral attitudes and traditions which form the essence of Islām. Now, however, the people, who are incapable of building personalities on the basis of strong morals, have sought consolation in the building of huge mosques containing dwarfish worshippers! In contrast to that were the early generations of believers. They avoided adorning their mosques but purified and disciplined themselves and were a true reflection of Islām.

❑ The mosque which the Prophet (ﷺ) dedicated his efforts towards building before any other task was not just a piece of land on which prayers alone were offered. In fact, the whole earth is a mosque, and Muslims need not confine themselves to a specific place for the purpose of worship. It was in fact a symbol of that to which Islām attached the utmost importance. It was a symbol of the deep connection between the worshippers and their Lord, which is constantly renewed with the passage of time and recurs throughout the night and day. There can be no value in a civilization which is negligent of the One God, is ignorant of the Last Day and mixes the good with

the bad. The civilization which Islām brought constantly reminds people of Allāh (ﷻ), and the meeting with Him urges adherence to the good and repudiation of the bad and stays within the limits set by Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ The Jews and the idolaters of Madīnah saw this new Prophet (ﷺ) labouring with his Companions to build the mosque and prepare it for prayers. Did they ever notice any behaviour which was questionable or any suspicious activity?

❑ Al Bayhaqī reported on the authority of 'Abdul Rahmān ibn 'Auf,[4] who said:

"The first sermon delivered by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in Madīnah was when he stood up and praised Allāh (ﷻ) in a way befitting Him. He then said: "To proceed: O people, send on (your good deeds) for the benefit of your souls. You do know, by Allāh (ﷻ), that one of you will surely be struck dead. Then his Lord will surely ask him, and there will be no spokesman nor guardian between them: 'Did My Messenger not come to you and convey (My message)? Did I not give you wealth and shower My bounties on you? What have you therefore sent forward for yourself?' He will look right and left and will see nothing but hell. So whoever of you can protect himself from the fire, even by means of a single date, let him do so, and whoever cannot find that, then by a good word, for through it a good deed will be rewarded from 10 to 700 times its value. Peace be upon the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)!"

The Brotherhood

As regards the second item the relationship of the members of the *Ummah* with one another the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) based it on perfect brotherhood. It was brotherhood in which the word

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[4] This is a mistake. Al-Bayhaqī reported it from Abū Salāmah ibn 'Abdul-Rahmān ibn 'Auf. This is how Ibn Kathir quoted it in *Al-Bidayah*, then he declared it to be *mursal* (therefore weak). Ibn Jarīr narrated with a sound chain another version of the first *khutba* which is totally different from this. This Ḥadīth is also weak owing to some complications.

"I" was non existent, and individuals moved with the spirit, interests and hopes of the group, unable to see themselves as separate entities detached from it. This brotherhood meant that the racial prejudices of *jahilīyah* should dissolve; that only for Islām should one show enthusiasm; that all differences of lineage, colour and country should disappear; and that no-one should be placed in front or behind except his/her bravery and piety. The Prophet (ﷺ) made this brotherhood into a contract to be executed, not a mere word and deed linked to blood and wealth, nor a mere greeting muttered by the tongue and having no effect.

❑ The feelings of altruism, beneficence and love were an integral part of this brotherhood and they filled the new society with the most wonderful examples. The Anṣār were so eager to welcome their brothers, the *Muhajirīn*, that lots had to be drawn for a *muhājir* to live with an Anṣārī. The *Muhajirīn* respected this sincere sacrifice and never exploited it nor took from it more than that which enabled them to establish themselves in free, dignified business.

❑ Al-Bukhārī narrated:

"When they arrived at Madīnah the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) united Abdul-Rahmān ibn 'Auf and Sa'd ibn al Rabī' in brotherhood."

❑ Sa'd (ﷺ) said to Abdul Rahmān: I am the most wealthy of the Anṣār and I shall split my wealth into two halves for you. I have two wives, so see which of them is more pleasing to you: name her and I shall divorce her, and when her period of waiting is over you can marry her."

❑ 'Abdul-Rahmān said: 'May Allāh (ﷻ) bless you as regards your family and wealth. Where is your market-place? "So they showed him the market square of the Banū Qaynuqā, and he returned only to show that he had acquired some cheese and butter! Then he went out the next day, and one day he came back wearing various adornments.

Then Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "What is this?

He replied: "I got married."

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "How much did you give her?
He replied: "A nugget of gold."

❑ One's amazement at Sa'd generosity cannot be equalled except by one's amazement at 'Abdul - Rahmān's nobility. He competed with the Jews in their own market and outstripped them in their field. Within few days he was able to earn enough to safeguard his chastity (that is, to get married). Lofty determination is a characteristic of faith. May Allāh (ﷻ) disfigure the faces of those people who clung to Islām, devoured it and devoured in its name until they caused the truth to lose its dignity in this world.

❑ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was the elder brother to this believing group. He did not distinguish himself above them by any honourable title. A Ḥadīth says:

"If I were to have taken anyone from my *Ummah* as a friend, I would have taken Abū Bakr (ؓ) as a friend. But the brotherhood of Islām is better.[5]

True brotherhood does not grow in a mean environment. Wherever ignorance, cowardice, miserliness and greed are prevalent, brotherhood will not appear and love will not flourish. If it were not for the fact that the Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions were brought up on pure qualities and were united on acceptable principles, the world would not have recorded for them that deep brotherhood for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ). The lofty ideal which had brought them together and the shining example which had led them to it were the two things which nurtured in them the qualities of virtue and honour and did not leave any space for the appearance of bad qualities.

❑ Moreover, Muhammad (ﷺ) was a man in whom were accumulated all the virtues which were scattered throughout the mankind, and he was therefore a reflection of the highest peak of perfection attainable by humans. No wonder, therefore, that

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[5] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

those who acquired their training from him and always supported him were the one who lived by bravery, fidelity and generosity. Love is like a gushing spring which flows of its own accord. It does not need machinery to extract its water. Similarly, brotherhood cannot be imposed by laws and regulations. It can come about only when people eradicate their attitude of selfishness, greed and egotism. There was this interchange of brotherliness among the early Muslims because they had evolved to a higher level in all aspects of their lives through Islām, and had become brothers by becoming the servants of Allāh (ﷻ). However, Had they become slaves of their own selves, they would not have allowed one another to continue living.

❑ The Islāmic emphasis on the value of sublime attitudes in the building of brotherhood does not negate the fact that the ruler must institute a system among the people so that each is given his/her rights and does his/her duty. If he/she does not do so willingly, then he/she is compelled to do so. It is similar to compulsory education, taxes, military service etc.

❑ The brotherhood contract continued to have priority over the rights of blood relationship in matters of inheritance until the Battle of Badr, when the following Qur'ānic āyah (verse) was Revealed:

﴾And those who are related are nearer to one another in the ordinance of Allah. Indeed! Allāh is All-knowing.﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 75)

Thus inheritance through the contract of brotherhood was abrogated and it remained the sole right of the blood relatives. Bukhārī narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās about the explanation of the following āyah (verse):

﴾And each we have appointed heirs of that which parents and close relatives leave; and as for those with whom your right hands have made a covenant, give them their due.﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 33)

He said: When the *Muhajirīn* arrived in Madīnah, a *Muhājir*

would inherit from an Anṣārī to the exclusion of his relatives. This was because of the bond of brotherhood with which the Prophet (ﷺ) had united them. So when the *āyāh* ﴾**And unto each We have...**﴿ was revealed, this was abrogated then the rest of the *āyāh* was revealed: "and as for those with whom your right hands have made a covenant, give them their due."

In other words, give them their due of support, kindness and advice since they can no longer inherit, although they can still receive something through your will.

❑ It is reported in detail of this brotherhood that the Prophet (ﷺ) made 'Alī (ﷺ) his brother, Ḥamza the brother of Zayd, Abū Bakr (ﷺ) the brother of Kharijah, and 'Umar (ﷺ) the brother of 'Utban ibn Mālik, etc. Some scholars have doubts about the Prophet (ﷺ) and 'Alī (ﷺ) becoming brothers. However, this account is supported by the authentic Ḥadīth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) declared that 'Alī (ﷺ) was to him as Hārūn (ﷺ) was to Mūsā (ﷺ).[6] This, however does not detract from the status of Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and his deserving of the leadership.

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[6] I say that there is no support here since the brotherhood referred to is more specific than that relationship [between Mūsā (ﷺ) and Hārūn (ﷺ)], and what is more specific cannot be proved by what is more general. Thus the brotherhood must be proved by a specific reference to it. I have studied the Ḥadīth on this issue and have found that they all contain a liar in their chains.

The most famous of them is the Ḥadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī and Al-Ḥākim by way of Ḥakim ibn Jubayr from Jami 'ibn 'Umayr from 'Umar (ﷺ). This narration says that the Prophet (ﷺ) united his Companions in brotherhood, and 'Alī (ﷺ) came to him, his eyes wet with tears, and said, "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), you have united your Companions in brotherhood and you have not united me with anyone.

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "You are my brother in this world and the Hereafter.

Al Tirmidhī says: " This is a good and strong Ḥadīth.

Al-Mubarakpuri commented on this Ḥadīth and said that Ḥākim ibn Jubayr was weak and suspected of being a Shi'ah. I say that both he and Al Tirmidhī missed the real weakness of the Ḥadīth, which is that Jam'ī bin 'Amīr was a *rāfida* (belonging to an extremist group) who fabricated. He also said: 'Āmir was one of the worst liars."

Al Dhahabi then quoted this Ḥadīth.

❑ The Ḥadīth in question is also reported by Sālim ibn Abū Hanīfah al Kahili, and Al-Kāhili has been declared a liar by Ibn Abi Shaybah and Mūsā ibn Hārūn. Also Dārquṭnī says: "He is one who fabricates Ḥadīth."

❑ Whoever wishes to study the remaining Ḥadīth and their weaknesses can refer to *Al-Majm'a* and *Al-La'lī Maṣnū'ah*.

The Non-Muslims

As regards the third item the relationship of the *Ummah* with the non-Muslims the Prophet (ﷺ) instituted tolerant and indulgent laws which were never known before in a world filled with racism and prejudice. Whoever thinks that Islām is a religion which cannot accept being neighbours with another religion, and that the Muslims are a people who can never find rest unless they alone remain dominant in this world, is mistaken, or rather, biased and audacious.

❑ When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madīnah he found Jews who had settled there and idolaters who were natives of the place. He did not begin to create any strategy to evict or wage war on these people. On the contrary, he accepted the presence of the Jews and idolaters with a good heart, and proposed that they make a covenant with himself as equals, they keeping their religion and he his.

❑ We shall quote a few items from the terms of the contract which he concluded with the Jews as proof of Islām's stance in this matter. The clauses state:

That the Muslims of the Quraish and Yathrib and all who follow them, join them and wage *jihād* with them are one *Ummah*. That the believers shall unite as one person against any of them who rebels or seeks to spread evil, sin, transgression or corruption among the believers, even if he be the son of one of them.

That no idolater should grant asylum to the wealth or person of anyone from the Quraish and should not hinder a believer from access to such.

That it is not permissible for a believer, who has accepted this pact and believes in Allāh (ﷻ) and the Last Day, to assist a criminal or grant him refuge; and that anyone who assists or grants refuge to such will have the curse and anger of Allāh (ﷻ) on him on the Day of Judgement, and no compensation or fine shall be accepted from him.

That the Jews shall spend with the believers as long as they are at war.

That the Jews of the Banū 'Auf are a group of believers, and the Jews shall have the right to keep their religion just as those of the Muslims are entitled to theirs.

That the Jews of the Banū al Najjār, Al-Hārith, Sā'idah, Banū Jasham, Banū Aus, etc, shall have the same rights as the Banū 'Auf.

That the Jews shall bear their own financial burdens and that Muslims shall bear their own, and that they (the Jews and the Muslims) shall assist each other against anyone who wages war on the signatories to this agreement.

That among themselves they should be sincere, advise one another and be kind to one another.

That a man is not in the wrong if his ally commits a wrong; that assistance should go to the one who is wronged; and that any one who is given asylum is to be considered as oneself as long as there is no injury or sin.

That Allāh (ﷻ) is witness to the most pious and righteous items mentioned in this document.

That all shall assist one another against any surprise attack on Yathrib.

That whoever leaves is safe and whoever remains in Madīnah is safe, except the one who oppresses or sins.

And that Allāh (ﷻ) is the Refuge for the one who does righteous deeds and fears [Him (ﷻ)].[7]

❑ This document expresses the desire of the Muslims for sincere co-operation with the Jews of Madīnah in order to establish peace and tranquillity throughout the city and put a stop to any transgressor or trouble-maker, whatever their religion might be. It clearly stated that freedom of religion was guaranteed. Thus there was not the least thought of attacking any group or oppressing any weak person. On the contrary, the words of this document clearly emphasized assistance to those who were oppressed, protection to

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[7] Ibn Isḥāq narrated this document without ascription (chain of narrators).

the one who sought refuge, and safeguarding all the general and specific rights. It sought the support of Allāh (ﷻ) for the best and most pious, just as it sought the wrath of Allāh (ﷻ) on anyone who was treacherous and deceitful.

❑ The Muslims and the Jews agreed to defend Yathrib if an enemy attacked it, and they granted the right to leave Madīnah to anyone who wanted to leave and the right to remain as long as its sanctity was observed. It must be noted that the Prophet (ﷺ) made mention in this document of the standing enmity between the Muslims and the idolaters of Makkah, and he announced his decisive rejection of any co-operation with them and prohibited extending any form of aid to them. Could anything other than this be expected from a people whose wounds were still dripping blood from the assault of the Quraish and its allies on them?

❑ Were the Jews truthful in their agreement to this treaty? It is almost certain that they were not serious when accepted the terms of this treaty. The problem with treaties is that faithfulness to them lasts only as long as one can see one's personal benefit from them. And when the treaty becomes stumbling block in fulfulling one's personal ambitions, adherence to it slackness and opportunities are sought whereby one will not have to remain bound by it. The Jews used to build their material and political power on the basis of disunity among the Arabs. However, when the Arabs entered into Islām, their old differences began to disappear and time began to show that Islām would make of them a single nation. Therefore the Jews started to feel uneasy. They were filled with anxiety. They soon began to plot against this new faith and lie in wait for its followers.

❑ The Jews in Madīnah in fact represented an atmosphere in which abounded all the shameful apparent formal religiosity and despicable trade with the principles of heaven. The most prominent characteristics of such an environment were envy, hypocrisy, outward formalities without depth, and love of discord. And behind all that were devious hearts and corrupt minds.

Perhaps as a result of their proximity to the Arabs they had acquired some of the virtues of the desert such as generosity and bravery. Nevertheless, their racial introversion dominated their character and these virtues stuck to their selves just as wallpaper sticks to a cracked wall.

❑ One would have expected the Jews to welcome Islām. Even if they did not do so, then at least one would have expected them to be more hesitant than the idolaters in opposing it, since Muhammad (ﷺ) was inviting towards monotheism, upright deeds and preparation for a more sublime life in the Hereafter. His religion esteemed Moosa (Moses) (ﷺ), spoke highly of his Scripture and urged the Jews to execute its laws and keep within its limits. The Jews, at first, kept quiet as a doubtful person and then they decided to show their opposition openly.

❑ Reference can be found in many Qur'ānic āyāt (verses) to the kind of welcome that was to be expected. For instance, when the idol-worshippers denied prophethood, then the people who possessed scriptures (the Jews and Christians) should have testified it.

﴾**They who disbelieve say: you are no messenger [of Allāh]. Say: Allāh, and whoever has true knowledge of the Scripture, is sufficient witness between me and you.**﴿ (Qur'ān 13: 43)

And when the idol-worshippers refused to be reminded of Allāh (ﷻ), the People of the Book should have been the ones who should act humbly when they were reminded:

﴾**And now indeed We have caused the Word to reach them, that haply they may give heed. Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it, they believe in it.**﴿ (Qur'ān 28: 51-52)

❑ You will be astonished to find that the Jews were just as insolent as the idolaters towards Allāh (ﷻ), fleeing from His laws and speaking of Him in a disrespectful tone. If Islām shows anger at someone who ascribes a son to Allāh (ﷻ), whether human or of stone, then what would you say about one who describes the Lord of the heavens and earth as being poor and miserly?

﴾The Jews say: Allāh's hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so!﴿ (Qur'ān 5: 64)

﴾Indeed Allah heard the words of those who said: "Allāh, forsooth, is poor, and we are rich!" We shall record their words with their slaying of the prophets wrongfully and We shall say: you will taste the punishment of burning.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 181)

❑ Islām, however, allows these stubborn people to remain in their error and does not root out their disbelief with the sword. It suffices by presenting its message, revealing its truthfulness and filling the air with its āyāt and signs. Those who are comforted by it and enter it will have its benefit. Otherwise they will be left to their own devices, and Islām will not ask anything of them except politeness and peace and allowing the truth to go on its way without hindrance or objection.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madīnah and stretched out his hand in peace to the Jews. He bore all their insults with forbearance until he saw them uniting to destroy him and his faith. It was then that he turned on them and there occurred a number of incidents between him and them which we shall discuss in their appropriate places.

❑ From fear of Allāh (ﷻ) and sincerity to Him, the spiritual side of the new society was created with sincere brotherhood its structure held together and its foundations remained firm. With justice, equality and co-operation, the policy towards outsiders was formulated and the followers of the other religions included in a treaty. As a consequence, the situation was stabilized and the Muslims found sufficient scope to rebuild their strength and regulate their affairs.

The Chosen Ones

The believers who had the opportunity to be Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), living close to him, were able to drink from the fountain of purity and perfection what was not available to others. One's feelings soften upon hearing sweet music and one's soul becomes elated upon reading of great heroes. In fact, those who witness the acting of wonderful stories are moved by the simulated atmosphere: they laugh and cry, they calm down and are roused. What, then, would you say of a people who follow a man upon whom descends Revelation, whose presence emanates perfection, and who envelops those around him in an aura of purity? When their souls slacken from doing the good he urges them forward, and when desires infiltrate their behaviour he purges them and restores their brightness to them. Great people reflect an aura which engulfs their environment. Just as a dimmed lamp will light up when it is put next to a blazing one, similarly, when ordinary people come close to great individuals they fall under their influence and follow in their footsteps.

❑ Around Muhammad (ﷺ) flocked a group of pious saints who became his trusted disciples. As a consequence of being in his company, their hearts were purified and their natures became so translucent that the rays of inspiration penetrated them and radiated wisdom and sound judgement. Do not think that a powerful intellect, in spite of its deep innate ability, can reach perfection of its own accord. If it is not guided by a superior force, it may continue to wander in every direction without perceiving its goal or treading the correct path. It would be just like a pilot who is lost in the air as a result of thick fog, although he may try his best to correct his instruments and send out signals, if there is no-one to guide him and explain how he should land, he will remain hovering in the air until some disaster occurs.

❑ How many a philosopher tackled the problems of the universe and life! Many of them totally missed the truth in spite of their

long search, and many others wasted much time before arriving at the truth. If they had simply followed the Prophets, their task would have ended in a few days without the wandering and stumbling. Moreover, humans are not intellect alone. They are, prior to that, hearts that ought to be freed from lust and sin, and saved from misery and darkness. The heart ought to be a force within its owner which leads towards goodness and love, and guide who directs toward beauty and mercy.

❑ The noble prophets are the ones who undertake the education and training of human hearts, and the people who resemble them most are those who follow in their footsteps. Among them the most prominent are those who spent their lives in their company, sharing with them the burdens of their mission and the troubles of their struggle.

❑ 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said:

Whoever wishes to follow the Sunnah of anyone, let him follow the Sunnah of those who are dead because we cannot guarantee that the living will be safe from temptation.

❑ Those are the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They were the best of this *Ummah*, the purest in heart, the deepest in knowledge and the least sophisticated. Allāh (ﷻ) chose them to be the Companions of His Prophet (ﷺ) and to establish His *dīn*. So acknowledge their excellence, follow them in their footsteps and hold fast to whatever you can of their character and way of life, because they were straight guidance.

There is no doubt that Muhammad's (ﷺ) Companions were superior to those of Moosa and Issa (Jesus)(عليهما السلام). The history of their faith, *jihād* and struggle to convey the *Da'wah* to future generations is complete and witnessed, neither faulty nor distorted, nor like any other history.

❑ We felt it necessary to make these preliminary remarks before discussing the *Adhān* (call to prayer) and how it began. Since the birth of this great feature of Islām it has contained clear indications of the greatness that can be achieved by people when

they purify themselves, defend the truth and become the recipients of inspiration.

❑ Ibn Ishāq said:

When the Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ) arrived at Madīnah the people used to assemble for prayers at their prescribed times without there being any announcement. So the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to use a bugle like that of the Jews with which they announced their prayers. Then he decided against the idea. Then he ordered a gong to be made and it was forged to be struck at the times of prayer.

❑ While they were in that state, 'Abdullāh ibn Zayd ibn Tha'labah saw the call to prayer in a dream. He came to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and said:

"O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), last night I had a dream. A man wearing two green garments passed by me and he was carrying a gong in his hand.

❑ I said: 'O servant of Allāh (ﷻ), will you sell this gong?'

He replied: 'And what will you do with it?'

❑ I said: 'We shall announce the prayers with it.''

❑ He said: 'May I show you something better than that?

I Said: 'What is it?'

He said: 'You should say: *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar,*

Ashhadu an laa ilaha illa-llah (twice)

Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasulu-ullah (twice)

Hayya 'ala al salah (twice)

Hayya 'ala al falah (twice)

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

La Ilahā illa-llah.'

❑ When the Prophet (ﷺ) was informed of this, he exclaimed: "it is a true dream, *inshā'Allah.* So stand up with Bilal (ﷺ) and tell it to him so that he may proclaim it, for he has a louder and nicer voice than you."

❑ When Bilāl (ﷺ) gave the call to prayer, 'Umar (ﷺ) heard him while he was still at home. He hurried out to the Prophet (ﷺ), dragging his robe. He said: "O Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ)! By Him who sent you with the truth, I dreamt the same as he did!"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Allāh (ﷻ) be praised."[8]

In another version it says: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) ordered Bilāl (ﷺ) and he proclaimed it.[9]

❑ Az Zuhri says: "Bilāl (ﷺ) added to the *adhān* of the morning prayers: *Al salatu khairum minan naum*" (twice) and the Prophet (ﷺ) approved it.[10]

❑ In another Ḥadīth 'Umar (ﷺ) is said to have seen in his dream someone saying:

"Do not use the gong but call people to prayer." 'Umar (ﷺ) then went to the Prophet (ﷺ) to inform him of this dream but Revelation had already come to him about that. 'Umar (ﷺ) was surprised when he heard Bilāl (ﷺ) calling to prayer, and when he told the Prophet (ﷺ) of what he dreamt, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

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[8] Narrated by Ibn Is-hāq in his *Al-Maghāzī* He said: 'Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Al Ḥarith reported to me from Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Zayd ibn Tha'labah from his father…" and this is a good chain. It was also narrated by Abū Dawūd, Darimi, Ibn Majāh, Al-Dārquṭnī, Bayhaqī and Aḥmad, all by Ibn Isḥāq. Al Tirmidhī narrated it in a shortened form and he said it was a good and sound Ḥadīth. A number of other scholars consider it a sound Ḥadīth and I have mentioned their names in my book Ṣaḥiḥ Sunan Abi Dāw'ūd.

[9] There is no need for this version since it already corresponds with the first.

[10] Narrated by Ibn Majāh from Al Zuhri with a weak chain, Aḥmad also narrated something similar but its chain is broken. Nevertheless, the meaning of the Ḥadīth is sound since there are many other supporting Ḥadīth, some of which I have quoted in my book *Al Thamar al-Mustatab al Fiqh al Sunnah wal Kitab*. For example, Anas (ﷺ) narrates: "The Tathwib (*Assalatu khairūm minannaum*) is in the morning prayers: after saying '*Hayya-ala-falah*' the *mu'adhdhin* says '*Assalatu khairūm minannaum*' twice." This was narrated by Al-Dārquṭnī, Ṭahawi and Bayhaqi, and the last said that its chain was sound. Note: it is not obscure to the scholar of *fiqh* that Bilāl (ﷺ) used to give the first *adhān* for the dawn prayer. When we join this to what has already been said, the result is that the Sunnah is to say the *tathwib* in the first *adhān*, not the second. This fact is mentioned clearly in a statement of Ibn 'Umar: "In the first *Adhān* after '*Al-Falah*' there is *Assalatu khairum minan-naum*; *Assalatū khairum minan-naum*." Ṭahawi and others narrated it with a good chain, as Ibn Ḥajar says in Al Talkhīs.

"Revelation has preceded you to it.[11]

This proves that Revelation came to confirm the dream that 'Abdullāh Ibn Zayd saw.

❑ These excellent words which resound at regular intervals, striking the ears, stirring the hearts and calling to the people to come to Allāh (ﷻ), were perceived by an enlightened mind in a true dream. That man hurried to the Prophet (ﷺ) to relate exactly what he saw, and it has become the call of the Muslims to prayer for as long as prayer continues on the surface of this earth.

❑ This harmony between people and Revelation is the limit of enlightenment and the peak of perfection. It is a sign that the guidance has become an integral part of them, for they remain steadfast to it in wakefulness and sleep and they move towards it instinctively and after reflection. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to keep his Companions immersed in the Revelation which descended on him from above. He read it to them and they read it to him as an indication of the duties they had to carry out for the *da'wah* and the responsibilities they had for their mission. In addition, they had to reflect on and understand its meaning.

❑ 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "Recite the Qur'ān to me."

❑ He said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), should I recite the Qur'ān to you whereas it was revealed to you?

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I love to listen to it from others."

'Abdullāh said: "So I recited for him from Sūrah *al Nisā* until I reached the āyah:

﴾'But how [will it be with them] when We bring of every people a witness, and We bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness against these?'﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 41)

Then he said: "That's enough now."

'Abdullāh turned to him and saw that his eyes were filled with tears.[12]

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[11] The chain is not complete for the Ḥadīth is *mursal*.

In one version there is the addition, said by the Prophet (ﷺ): "A witness as long as I am with them."

❑ If people can be guided to the words of the *adhān* (call for Prayer) by their pure hearts, devoted to the worship of the truth, then there were those Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) also who had totally imbibed the meaning of faith and dedicated themselves sincerely to the fountain of prophethood to such an extent that Allāh (ﷻ) ordered His Prophet (ﷺ) to recite some of the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān to them as an acclamation of their status with Allāh (ﷻ) and their steadfastness in faith.

❑ Anas ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to Ubayy ibn Ka'b:

"Indeed Allāh (ﷻ) has ordered me to recite to you *'Al Bayyinah*."

Ubayy said: "Did he name me?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied yes.

In another version Ubayy asked: "Did Allāh (ﷻ) name me to you?" He said, "yes". Ubayy said: "Was I mentioned by the Lord of the Worlds?" He said "yes", and Ubayy's eyes were filled with tears.[13]

The Meaning of Worship

The secret of the high spiritual and collective status which was attained by the Companions (*Ṣaḥabah)* was that their relationship with Allāh (ﷻ) was on the proper basis. They did not feel, as many others do, any sort of inconvenience or discomfort in doing things for Him nor did they suffer from any distraction or confusion.

❑ In the human nature two qualities are not unknown: admiration of greatness and acknowledgment of kindness. When you see a precision instrument or appliance, or an exquisite picture, or an eloquent article, you do not stop talking of its

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[12] Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim, and the wording is the latter's.

[13] Narrated by Bukhārī. The second version is also narrated by him as well as Muslim and Aḥmad.

beauty until your praise extends to its creator. The deep wisdom or skill of individuals makes you bow to them involuntarily in respect and admiration. Likewise, when someone does you a favour, you always remember it, and your tongue expresses your gratitude just as your heart is filled with praise. A poet says: "Your favour has gained you three things from me: My hand, my tongue and my hidden heart.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām came to arouse these two qualities in the hearts of mankind towards the One Who is most deserving of them. Do you not admire greatness and salute its possessor? Do you not appreciate kindness and show gratitude to its doer? You admire the inventor of the aeroplane, and every-time you see it streaking through the atmosphere your praise of his genius increases. So what do you think, therefore, of the One Who causes the thousands of stars to move in space without stopping or deviating? What do you think of Him Who created the mind of that inventor and deposited intelligence in the folds of his brain so that he could produce those things which arouse your admiration? Is not your Lord and the Lord of all things more deserving of your praise for His greatness and favours?

❑ When you recognize His greatness through the magnificence of the creation which surrounds you, you will be ashamed to attack Him and attribute anything unworthy to Him and you will say, together with the people of knowledge:

﴾O our *Rabb* [Lord]! You did not create [all] this without purpose].﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 91)

If generous people invite you to a meal and you see the smiles on their faces and the plentiful food, you will remember them as long as you live and will do your best to repay them. You will talk to everyone you know of these hospitable people. So what do you say of Him Who has taken charge of you and showered His bounties on you from the cradle to the grave? You eat only of what He has provided; you cover yourself only with the clothing He has given you; you take shelter only under His roof; and you do not

escape from any hardship except with His help.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) indeed united the people with their Lord on the basis of acknowledgment of His greatness and appreciation of His bounty. Thus when they arose to obey Him they were impelled to perform their duty by their heartfelt desire and the sincere wish to pay their respects to the One who is great and to praise their Benefactor. Worship is not obedience by force and anger but obedience by will and love. Worship is not obedience from ignorance and negligence but obedience from knowledge and awareness.

❑ The government may issue an order to control prices and merchants accept it unwillingly, or an order to lower wages and the employees accept it angrily. You may be able to control a dumb animal and lead it, although it does not know whether it is to food or death. All these are kinds of obedience far removed from the meaning of worship which Allāh (ﷻ) prescribed for mankind.

❑ The words of worship which Allāh (ﷻ) caused us to repeat often in the āyah: ﴿You alone we worship and from you alone we seek help,﴾ and which He (ﷻ) made the purpose of creation in the āyah: ﴿I have not created jinn or men except to worship me,﴾ mean submission coupled with knowledge and love. In other words, it stems for admiration of greatness and appreciation of favour. There are numerous Qur'ānic āyāt which build the believers' attitude on these firm pillars. While acquainting them with Allāh (ﷻ), it shows them shining examples of His wonderful creation and His boundless favours, and it tears away the veils of ignorance and ingratitude from their eyes.

﴿Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and causes water to descend from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you; and makes the ships to be of service to you that they may sail upon the sea at His command, and has made the rivers of service to you. And he makes the sun and the moon, constant in their courses, to be of service to you, and has made the night and the day of service to you. And He gives you all that you ask of Him, and if you

counted the bounty of Allah, you could not reckon it. Indeed, Man is verily a wrongdoer, an ungrateful creature.》 (Qur'ān 14: 32-34)

❑ People will not fulfil a task if they are driven to it with red-hot rods. Excellence and perfection are attained only when the task is accompanied by desire and willingness. When people accept a belief with their minds and souls they will give it their lives and feelings, they will live with it in their dreams, and it will spur them to activity in their waking hours. This will eventually elevate them to a position of understanding and perfection in their service. Hence Islām does not think highly of a purely theoretical faith, and does not accept it except as a stairway to something higher, which is faith with both understanding and emotion.

❑ One's feelings must play a great role in the matters of faith. They are not Muslims who recognize Allāh (ﷻ) and hate Him. Nor is there any value in a Muslim who recognizes Allāh (ﷻ) while the feelings are empty and have no admiration nor gratitude, just as he has no disdain nor ingratitude. The Muslims every bit of them, are those, who know Allāh (ﷻ) with certain and definite knowledge and join to this knowledge their feelings which acknowledge the glory of the Glorious and bounty of the Bountiful. Faith in its manner is a productive faith and is the worker of miracles, the builder of nations and the establisher of advanced civilizations. It is what makes individuals relish the responsibilities placed upon them, and thus they will undertake them as their personal desires, not as religious duties.

❑ Do you think that when the Prophet (ﷺ) stood at night, praying until his feet became swollen, he used to fight off the pain in his body like the truant pupil who is made to stand for long hours by way of punishment? Of course not. The sweetness of his private talk with Allāh (ﷻ) and his engrossment in humility made him unaware of any pains that might occur owing to the long hours of standing.

❑ An enthusiastic man overflowing with zeal may continue working to such an extent that the less enthusiastic would find it impossible to keep up with him. The weight of affairs in the

eyes of those who possess faith and determination is unlike that in the eyes of those who are skeptical or weak-minded. Look at Ḥudhayfah ibn al Yamān when he went off to spy on the idolaters in the Battle of the Trench during a cold wintry night filled with howling winds. He said later about himself: "It was as if I were wading into the jaws of death."

The strength of his faith made him go into the darkness of the night as if he was an arrow shot accurately at its target.

❑ This faith based on living feelings ignited fierce battles and led the Muslims to certain victory. It was the faith that destroyed the sovereignty of oppression and tyranny which had reigned for many centuries and was thought to be invincible. Its basis, as you have learnt, was the absorption of faith into both the heart and feelings, and its flowering tree was nurtured by ever-increasing knowledge of Allāh (ﷻ) and awareness of His greatness and bounty.

❑ That is the Qurā'nic method of acquainting people with Allāh (ﷻ). This method sets them on a foundation of servitude to Him, consisting of love and self-sacrifice, not scorn and humiliation. It is a servitude of admiration of greatness and acknowledgment of favours not a servitude which takes away one's free will and debases the mankind.

﴾Say [O Muhammed] "Praise be to Allāh and peace be upon His servants whom he has chosen! Is Allāh best, or [all] that you ascribe as partners to [Him]? "Is not He [best] Who created the heavens and the earth and sends down for you water from the sky wherewith We cause to spring forth delightful orchards, whose trees it never has been your to cause to grow. Is there any god beside Allāh? No, but there are people who ascribe equals [to Him]! "Is not He [best] Who made the earth a fixed abode, and placed rivers in the fold thereof, and placed firm hills therein, and has set a barrier between the two seas? Is there any god beside Allāh? No, but most of them are ignorant! "Is not He [best] who answers the wronged one when he cries Him and removes the evil, and has made you viceroys of the

earth? Is there any god beside Allāh? Little do they reflect! "Is not He [best] Who guides you in the darkness of the land and the sea, He who sends the winds as heralds of His mercy? Is there any god beside Allāh? High exalted be Allāh from all that they ascribe as partners to [Him]! "Is not He [best] Who produces creation, then reproduces it and Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Is there any god beside Allāh? Say: bring your proof, if you are truthful!﴿ (Qur'ān 27: 59-64)

❑ These questions, following quickly one after the other, open up for the soul wide horizons of intelligent faith, impel it toward Allāh (ﷻ) with sincerity, and make it flee from the evils of idolatry as grown men flee from the pranks of children. Most of the āyāt which call to contemplation and investigation spin around this fixed axis.

❑ The soul, in times of haughtiness, may stand in need of discipline by force and threats to curb refractoriness. Nevertheless, this does not conflict at all with the principle which we have already established. A father's sternness to his child at times does not negate the natural love he has for him. The Qur'ān, when it stimulates the lofty tendencies in people and shows them the effects of Providence on them, sometimes couples that with sharp stings which awaken their sluggish feelings so that they may advance and use their minds, not recoil and show cowardice.

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴾Have you not seen how Allāh has sent down water from the sky and has caused it to penetrate the earth as watersprings, and afterwards thereby produces crops of diverse hues; and afterwards they wither and you see them turn yellow; then He turns them into chaff Indeed, this is a reminder for men of understanding.﴿ (Qur'ān 39: 21)

Then He (ﷻ) says in the next *āyāh*:

﴾Is he whose bosom Allāh has expanded for the Surrender [al-Islām] [to Him], so that he follows a light from his Lord, [like the one who

disbelieves]? Then woe unto those whose hearts are hardened against rememberance of Allāh. Such are in plain error.》 (Qur'ān 39: 22)

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) himself adopted the same course in implanting faith and nurturing its fruits. His way of approaching Allāh (ﷻ) was a living lesson which filled the hearts with Allāh's glory and greatness and urgency to obey Him and avoid sin. These hearts opened up to the guidance of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) and thereafter had space for nothing else.

❑ Jubayr ibn Mut'im reported:

I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) reciting Sūrah *al Tūr* at the evening prayers (*Maghrib*) and when he reached the āyah:

《Or were they created out of nothing? Or are they creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? No, but they are sure of nothing! Or do they own the treasures of your Lord? Or have they been given charge [thereof]?》 (Qur'ān 52: 35-37)

my heart almost skipped a beat![14]

❑ The growth of faith from an idea in the head to a feeling in the heart, making a person pulsate with certainty and sincerity, is an integral part of the Sunnah. It is the bedrock of the noble virtues which possessed the Muslims and raised their status. It is what is meant by the famous Ḥadīth:

"There are three things, in which if they are present in a person, will be found the sweet taste of faith: that Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger should be more beloved to him than anything else; that he should love a servant [of Allāh (ﷻ)] for no other reason than to gain Allāh's pleasure; and that he should hate to return to *kufr* (disbelief) after Allāh (ﷻ) has saved him from it, just as he would dislike being thrown into a fire.[15]

❑ In a similar manner, faith in prophethood and love for the Prophet (ﷺ) should be so deep-rooted that one forgets oneself.

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[14] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī.

[15] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim as well as others on the authority of Anas (ﷺ).

One should be ready to sacrifice self and possessions for the sake of prophethood and the Prophet (ﷺ), not out of obligation or fear but out of love and devotion. 'Abdullāh ibn Hishām said:

We were with the Prophet (ﷺ), on whom be peace, and he had taken 'Umar (ؓ) by the hand, when the latter said: Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)! You are more beloved to me than anything else except myself."

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "No, By Him in Whose hands my soul lies, unless I become more beloved to you than yourself."

'Umar (ؓ) then said: "Now, you are assuredly more beloved to me than myself."

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

"Now, 'Umar (ؓ).[16] (That is, now only has your faith been perfected.)

❑ This Ḥadīth needs explanation. It is not right for virtues to be subjected to differing criteria. The people respected the virtue of faithfulness in Samuel when he let his son be sacrificed, preferring that he should fulfil his trust and return it safely to the person who trusted him. When people sacrifice themselves to protect their honour, they have carried out their duty.

❑ Muhammad (ﷺ) did not demand of the people that they should sanctify his physical form of flesh and blood, or that they should kill themselves for him to live, or that they should debase themselves for him to attain honours, or that he should be made a god above them as Pharaoh and his family made themselves gods. Muhammad (ﷺ) wished the believers to sanctify the status of prophethood, follow its lofty ideals exemplified in himself, and protect, by way of his person, the landmarks of Revealed truth and the signs of universal mercy.

❑ The Prophets do not live for themselves alone and misfortune does not befall them or their families alone. They live for the entire universe. Are they not the center of its complete guidance and general happiness? It is not surprising, therefore, that

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[16] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Aḥmad on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn Hishām.

sacrificing oneself for them should be an integral part of faith and a rung in the ladder of perfection. Muhammad (ﷺ) was indeed a man worthy of love. The world does not know of another man who was so much esteemed by people that they totally dedicated themselves to protecting and surrounding him as was recorded of the bearer of this great message of Islām, Muhammad (ﷺ), son of 'Abdullāh.

A Leadership Which Attracts the Hearts

'Abdullāh ibn Salām reported:

"As soon as the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) arrived in Madīnah the people flocked towards him, and I was among those who came to see him. When I contemplated his face and scrutinized it I found that it was not the face of a liar.

He continued:

The first thing I heard him say was: "O People! Spread peace, feed others, pray at night while the people are asleep, and you will enter paradise in peace."[17]

❑ The light from one's inner self is reflected on one's face, and in its features can be read the signs of one's purity. 'Abdullāh went to acquaint himself with the news of this migrating leader. He looked at him in an effort to determine his truthfulness and the first thing that satisfied him after scrutinizing him was that he was no liar. It is not possible to recognize a person's intellectual and moral standing by a fleeting glance. Nevertheless, the physical features which hid the spirit are often an accurate guide to what lies beneath.

❑ Those who lived with Muhammad (ﷺ), however, loved him to the point of insanity. They did not care whether their necks were cut off so long as he was not scratched by a nail.

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[17] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad. Al Tirmidhī said it was an authentic Ḥadīth, Al Ḥākim said it was according to the stipulations of Bukhārī and Muslim, and Al Dhahabī agreed with him.

Their love for him was only because the perfection which he had attained, and which is usually only a dream, was not seen in any other human being.

❑ Thaubān, the close associate of the Prophet (ﷺ), loved him exceedingly and could not bear to part company with him. One day when he approached him, his face was pale and he looked sad. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him what was the matter, and he replied:

O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I have no pain or sickness except that whenever I do not see you I feel extremely miserable until I am able to meet you. Moreover, whenever I remember the Hereafter, I become afraid that I shall not see you because you will be raised to the lofty mansions (*illiyīn*) with the Prophets, and if I enter heaven I shall be at a lower level than you, and if I do not enter it I shall never have the chance of seeing you again.

Thereupon the following Qur'ānic āyah was revealed:

﴾Those who obey Allāh and the Messenger, are with those whom Allāh has shown favour: the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they!﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 69)[18]

In one Ḥadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A person shall be with whom he loves."[19]

This refers to the love of an ideal example, not the love of lust. When people love someone who has similar or higher qualities than themselves, then the basis of such a love is that

[18] Narrated by Al Wāhidī in *Asbab al Nuzūl* on the authority of Al Kalbī. Apart from the fact that there is a disturbance in its chain, Al Kalbī is a noted liar. However, the same Ḥadīth is also narrated by Al Ṭabarānī in Al Mu'jam al Saghir, by Abū Na'im in Al-Hulyah from the same chain, and Al-Wāhidi from him. Also ibn Mardawaih and Al-Muqaddisī narrated on the authority of 'Ā'ishah without the question "What is the matter?" Al-Muqaddisi says of it: "I do not see anything wrong in its chain." It is also supported by a Ḥadīth reported by Ibn 'Abbās and other versions reported by Sa'id ibn Jubayr and others. They are all quoted by Ibn Kathīr in *Al Bidayah*.

[19] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Anas (ﷺ), Ibn Mas'ūd and Abū Mūsā. It is a *mutawatir* Ḥadīth, as affirmed by Ibn Kathīr and others, that is, it is reported through numerous authentic chains.

their hearts are receptive towards the noble qualities and innate abilities with which nature has endowed him or her.

❑ The marks of bravery and generosity are not welcomed by those who are cowardly or miserly. They are welcomed only by those who possess them to some extent and are on their way to perfecting what they lack. It is a bounty of Allāh, therefore, that He has caused the great people to be surrounded by those who love them, the beauty of greatness. Thus Allāh (ﷻ) says after the previously quoted *āyāh*:

﴾Such is the bounty of Allāh, and Allāh suffices as knower.﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 70)

❑ In truth, the follower and devotee is a virtuous person. However, there are many despicable people in the world who if they rise in status, show contempt to those below them, and if they fall, hate those above them. So how does one know when they will cleanse their hearts of the feelings of hatred and inferiority? As for those who are devoted to unblemished principles, no sooner do they see the ideal representatives who reflect them than they flock around them, and their eyes shine with devotion for them, that is, devotion for the principles which have come to life in them. Allāh (ﷻ) will not cause this firm belief to go to waste or allow its virtuous supporters to deviate.

❑ Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"On the day when the Prophet (ﷺ), entered Madīnah, everything in it became illuminated, and on the day when he died everything in it became dull, and as soon as we had finished burying him our hearts began to grieve."[20]

Look at the cheerfulness of overpowering emotions, how it paints the horizons in its wonderful colours. And look at the grief of loss, how it spreads its dullness over everything! Such

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[20] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Al Tirmidhī, Al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad. Tirmidhī said it was a sound Ḥadīth, and Al-Ḥākim said it was sound according to the conditions of Muslim. Al Dhahabī agreed with this classification, and it is indeed as they say. Al Dārimī also narrated it in a similar manner and his chain is also sound according to the conditions of Muslim. This version is also narrated by Al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad.

was the home of the Hijrah. It loved Allāh (ﷻ) and it loved His Prophet (ﷺ), and it was this powerful love which was the secret of its absolute support for Islām and its willing sacrifice of all its precious possessions. Any nation who is so strongly attached to its leader is bound to crush mighty mountains with determination.

❑ Ḥasan, son of 'Alī (ؓ), asked Hind ibn Abi Ḥālah to describe the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and he described his physical features as follows:

He walked modestly but briskly, with long strides. When he walked it was as if he was descending a slope that is, descending with force, and when he turned he turned with his whole body. His gaze was lowered, and he looked at the earth much more than he looked at the sky. His gaze was not noticeable, that is, he did not stare. He led his Companions and he first greeted anyone he meets with a *salām*.

❑ Ḥassan said: "Describe to me his way of talking."

❑ Hind replied:

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was continually sad, always preoccupied. He was never at rest and he never spoke without need. He remained silent for long periods. He began and finished his speech with clear pronunciation without mumbling. He spoke few but comprehensive words and to the point. He said nothing superfluous nor did he say too little. His tone was mild neither harsh nor deriding. He magnified a blessing even though it might be small. He never criticized anything, and he never criticized nor praised a man of taste for what he ate. His anger was great if an attack was made on the truth, and could not be suppressed until he defended the truth. He would not, however, get angry if he was attacked, nor would he defend himself, out of forbearance. When he pointed with his whole arm and when he was surprised he would raise his arms. When he became angry he would turn away and when he became joyful he would lower his head. His laugh was less than a smile and he would become listless in a hailstorm or the like.

❑ Hind described his relationship with the people in this way:

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to hold his tongue except about what concerned him. He would keep his Companions together and not separate them. He would be kind to upstanding men of the community and appoint them over others. He was careful of people without keeping himself apart from any-one of them. He would enquire about his Companions and ask people about their conditions. He considered the bad as bad and disapproved of it. He was moderate in his affairs and did not change his mind. He was not neglectful for fear that they might be neglectful or become bored. He was prepared for every occasion. He never fell short of the truth nor did he bypass it for something else. Those nearest to him were the best of people. The most virtuous of them in his sight was the one who gave the most advice, and the greatest of them in status was the best of them in sympathizing with and assisting others.

❑ Then he said, describing his manner of sitting:

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) never sat down or stood up without mentioning Allāh (ﷻ). He never reserved any place for himself. When he entered a gathering he sat wherever there was space and he ordered others to do so. He gave all those sitting with him their due attention so that none should feel that another was more favoured than himself. Whoever sat with him or stood with him for some reason, he would be patient with him until he (the other man) left. Whoever asked a need of him, he would never send him away without (fulfilling) it, speaking kindly to him. His generosity and kindness extended to everyone, and he became a father to them while they drew close to one another under his guidance on the basis of truth, and vied with one another, under his direction, in the matter of piety. His gatherings were gathering of compassion and modesty, patience and faithfulness. Voices were not raised in them and gossip was not spread. They were compassionate towards one another: they showed respect to the elder, tenderness to the young, elderly

helped the needy and made the stranger feel at home.

As regards his character, he said:

He was always pleasant and easygoing. He was neither hard nor rude nor foul-mouthed. He neither scolded too much nor praised too much. He ignored what he did not like but did not become disheartened at it. He kept himself from three things: showing off, excessiveness and what did not concern him; and he kept three things from the people: he did not find fault with anyone, nor abuse anyone, nor seek out the weaknesses of anyone. He spoke only of those things from which he hoped to gain blessings. When he spoke, his audience would bow their heads as if there were birds sitting upon them. When he kept quiet, then they would speak, and they did not rival one another to speak in front of him. I was one of them who spoke in his audience. They would all listen until he had finished. Their statement was the statement of the first person to speak. He laughed at what they laughed at and wondered at what they wondered at. He would be patient with a stranger's uncouth manner of speaking, and he would say: "If you see a needy person seeking help, then assist him," and he would not seek appreciation except from someone capable."[21]

❑ This is a rough outline of how the people saw the marks of perfection in the lifestyle of the "Praised" Prophet (ﷺ). However, It is not possible to fathom the depths of the qualities and attributes possessed by him. Detailed knowledge of great people cannot be possessed by every person, not to speak of that great man whose entire character was the Qur'ān. The community which he produced for the mankind in Madīnah

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[21] A weak Ḥadīth narrated at length by Al Tirmidhī in *Al Shamā'il* on the authority of Jamī' ibn 'Amr, who said: "It was reported to me by a man from the Banū Tamīm, of the children of Abū Hālah, and he is called Abū 'Abdullāh Ibn Abi Ḥālah, and he heard it from Ḥasan, son of 'Alī (ﷺ)." This is a weak chain since Jami is weak, and about him Abū Dāwūd says: "I fear he may be liar."

Also Abū 'Abdullāh is unknown, while Hind ibn Abi Ḥālah has not been assessed as authentic or not. Abū Dawūd says about this Ḥadīth, "I fear it may have been fabricated," and Bukhārī indicated that It was not authentic.

had reached the pinnacle. They worked and strove only for Allāh (ﷻ), and pushed ahead to the aspired goal with joy and confidence. They flocked around their Prophet (ﷺ) as students would flock around their teacher, or as soldiers would flock around their general, or as children would flock around their loving father. They stood together shoulder to shoulder in strong bonds of brotherhood, and they were a single soul in many bodies and cemented bricks in a well-constructed building. They wished to establish relation with others on the basis of justice and righteousness: thus no innocent person would be wronged in their presence, and no-one in distress would be deprived of their kind concern.

❑ They considered those who accepted Islām to be free of their past, in spite of the attacks they might have previously made on their community. So there would be no examination of the past of those who cleansed themselves of their *jahilīyah* and repented to their Lord. On the contrary, they would join the Muslim community as noble and respected members of it, their past sins forgiven, so that they might turn over a new leaf and start his new life with good deeds. As for those who remained disbelievers and strove to impede the progress of Islām, it was essential to equip oneself to fight them until the earth was purified of their disbelief and enmity.

❑ That group of believers toiled for Allāh's pleasure and spent their days and nights in worshipping Him. They had resigned themselves to one of two alternatives: either to live for Allāh (ﷻ) or to die in His cause. If you made an attempt to balance the Muslims of those times against the rest of the mankind, you would find that all the factors of preference were in their favour, while on the other hand, other nations were constantly shaken by tribulations. It was no wonder, therefore, that within a few years they had become a youthful state executing the commands of Allāh (ﷻ) without interference.

❑ In addition, detailed legislation began to be Revealed in Madīnah, organizing the private and public affairs of the Muslims and explaining the basis of the lawful and unlawful in stages until they reached their final form as was recorded by the history of legislation. The penal code was set, *zakāh* and fasting were made compulsory, and the number of *rak'at* in prayers was increased for the first time in Madīnah. According to a report of 'Ā'ishah *Ṣalāh* consisted of two *rak'at* when it was made compulsory and the *Ṣalāh* when travelling remained at that, whereas later the *ṣalāh* on non-travellers was increased.[22]

❑ It is worth mentioning here that 'Ā'ishah started living with the Prophet (ﷺ) during the first year of the Hijrah although their marriage had taken place before the Hijrah.[23] We shall speak about polygamy and the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) in another chapter.

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[22] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of 'Ā'ishah. In one of Bukhārī's versions she is reported to have said: "*Salāh* was made compulsory as two *rak'at*. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated and four were prescribed, while the prayers when travelling were left as before."

[23] This is the meaning of the authentic report from 'Ā'ishah in which she said: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) married me after the death of Khadījah, two or three years before his departure for Madīnah while I was yet 7 years old. When he arrived in Madīnah some women came to me... then they took me to the Prophet (ﷺ) and I lived with him from the age of 9 years." Narrated by Bukhārī and Aḥmad. In another report she said: "He married me in *Shawwāl* and started living with me in *Shawwāl*.

Chapter Six

The Bloody Struggle

Islām entered Madīnah at a time when the forces of unbelief were pursuing it from every angle, and the Muslims sought refuge in their new settlement as soldiers would seek refuge in their fortress. They kept themselves prepared so that no one might attack them from any direction. They had learnt bitterly from the years of experience in Makkah that weakness led to humiliation and tribulation. People do not appreciate health until they are struck down by sickness, nor do they value wealth until poverty besets them. And who were capable of learning faster than the *muhajirīn* and the Anṣār from the lessons of the past? There was their Prophet pursued by killers for a thousand miles, while most of the *muhajirīn* were robbed of their possessions and homes and chased out of the Holy City. "A state of war" was undoubtedly in existence between the tyrants of Makkah and the Muslims in their new homeland, and it would be foolish to lay the blame for this hostility on the Muslims.

❑ Moreover, the enmity shown toward the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions no longer came from the Quraish alone but also from the other idolaters (*mushrikīn*) of the Arabian peninsula. This is not blind supposition, for even the worshippers of idols among the people of Madīnah had already begun to declare their hostility to Islām, and joining with them were the Jews, who felt fearful at the spread of this faith and the collapse of Arab paganism in its wake.

❑ It was absolutely necessary, therefore, to be prepared for every eventuality, lie in wait for any attacker and muster such a force as would discipline the criminals the day they stretched out their necks. The fighting prescribed by Islām and those battles waged by the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions are the best form of *jihād*. We have explained in other books of ours,[1]

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[1] *Al Islām wal Istibdad al Siyāsi* (Islām and Political Oppression) and *Al-Ta'aṣṣub wal Tasāmuḥ bayn al Masīḥīyah wal Islām* (Tolerance and Intolerance between Islām and Christianity).

by scientific reasoning and historical analysis, that the wars fought by Islām in the era of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his successors were necessary to protect the truth, repel injustice and hostility and break the power of the tyrants. As for the fabrications of the orientalists, the malice shown towards Islām from the other religions and the claim that it was the Muslims who first used force when there was no justification for it, those are all lies and part of the scheme to efface Islām from the earth and make the Muslims slaves of the crusaders and the zionists.

❑ A time comes when fighting becomes obligatory. When Islām and its followers are threatened to extinction and the hostile forces unite to wipe Islām and the Muslims out for ever fighting becomes the only alternative for survival. Such situation and circumstances developed in the early days of Islām, before and after the Hijrah. Same situation developed again in recent times when the lands of Islām have fallen into the hands of the rogues of the earth, and the most devilish of policies have been drawn up to extinguish them little by little. How can the call to arms, therefore, be considered strange, and those who dedicate themselves to sacrifice in Allāh's way be looked upon with disdain? How can the vocation of death be disapproved in a nation upon which butchers are pouncing from all quarters?

﴾And let not those who disbelieve suppose that they can outstrip [Allāh's purpose]. Indeed! They cannot escape. Make ready for them all you can of [armed] forces and of horses tethered, so that you foil the enemy of Allāh and your enemy, and others beside them whom you do not know. Allāh knows them. Whatsoever you spend in the way of Allāh, it will be repaid to you in full and you will not be wronged. And if they incline to peace, you must incline also to it, and trust in Allāh. Indeed! He is the Hearer, the Knower. And if they would deceive you, then Indeed! Allāh is sufficient for you.﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 59-62)

❑ In accordance with the dictates of Revelation and the politics of the times, and to preserve the rights of Allāh (ﷻ) and the

rights of life, the Prophet (ﷺ) trained his men in the art of war. He participated with them in the training, the manoeuvres and the battles. He counted the efforts in these fields as steps towards the noblest of actions and the holiest of worship, and by this means he would perhaps be able to blunt the edge of unbelief and deflect its harm from the Muslims.

﴾So fight [Muhammad] in the way of Allāh you are not taxed [with the responsibility for anyone] except for yourself and urge on the believers. Peradventure, Allāh will restrain the might of those who disbelieve. Allāh is stronger in might and stronger in inflicting punishment.﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 84)

❑ 'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir reported: "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say while he was on the pulpit: 'And prepare for them with whatever you can of force. Indeed, force is shooting! Indeed force is shooting! Indeed, force is shooting.[2]

This Ḥadīth emphasizes the forceful effect that accurate aim has on winning a battle, and shooting is broad enough to cover arrows, bullets or bombs.

❑ Faqīm Al-Lahmi said:

"I said to 'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir: "You still go between these two targets although you are an old man and it is hard on you!"

❑ 'Uqbah replied: "If it were not for what I heard from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I should not take the trouble."

❑ I said: "And what is that?"

❑ He said: " I heard him saying: 'Whoever learns to shoot and then abandons it, is not one of us!'"[3]

Look at how the old men continued to practise shooting at their targets, keeping their aim accurate and their bodies agile.

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[2] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Al Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad.

[3] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim. The last sentence is narrated by the compilers of the *Sunan* through another chain of authorities.

Islām expects everyone to have the ability to fight and makes it compulsory for young and old to acquire such a skill.

❑ Abū Najih Al Salami reported:
I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying:

"Whoever hits the target with an arrow, it shall be a degree for him in paradise." On that day I hit my targets with ten arrows, and I also heard him saying: "Whoever shoots an arrow for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ), it will be equivalent to freeing a slave."[4]

❑ 'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir again reported that he heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying:

"Indeed God Almighty brings three people into paradise on account of one arrow:

1. The maker, who expects a good reward for his deed;
2. The one who shoots it; and
3. The one who hands it to him.

So shoot and ride, and it is better for you to shoot than to ride. All pastimes are vain: there is no praiseworthy pastime except three things:

1. One's training of one's mare;
2. One's dallying with one's wife; and
3. One's shooting with one's bow.

These are all of the truth; and whoever abandons shooting from dislike after having learnt it, then it is a bounty which he has left or for which he is ungrateful".[5]

❑ Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) narrated: "Attached to the necks of horses is goodness until the Day of Judgement: reward and booty."[6] This

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[4] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Al Nasā'ī, Aḥmed and Al Ḥākim, and the latter said that it fulfilled the conditions laid down by Bukhārī and Muslim, and Dhahabī agreed with him. In fact it is according to the conditions of Muslim alone, since the Tābi'i who reported the Ḥadīth was Mi'din ibn Abi Ṭalḥa, from whom Bukhārī never narrated any Ḥadīth.

[5] There is a disturbance in its chain, as pointed out by Al-Ḥāfiz al-'Iraqi in his book *Akhrij Al Ihya*.

[6] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Ibn 'Umar and 'Urwah al Bariqi. However, Ibn 'Umar's version does not have "reward and booty." It would be better, therefore, to ascribe it to 'Urwah.

is an encouragement from the Prophet (ﷺ) to learn horse riding. The highlighting of one aspect of fighting does not detract from the value of the other aspects or lower their importance. Look also at how the Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged the learning of warfare at sea in his saying:

"A battle at sea is better than ten battles on land, and whoever crosses the sea, it is as if he has crossed all the valleys, and the person who is seasick is like the person who is stained by his own blood."[7]

States are in need of infantry on land and fleets in the sea and air, and every item of weaponry is a help towards achieving victory. However, the closest of soldiers to Allāh's pleasure are the ones who hit their enemies the hardest and are most careful of their duty towards their nation and their ideology, whether they walk shoot, sail or fly.

Flying Columns

When the Muslims had settled in, they began sending out armed flying columns which traversed the neighbouring deserts and caravan routes between Makkah and Syria, and explored the conditions of the tribes which lived here and there.

1. In Ramaḍān of the first year, Ḥamzah, leading a party of thirty Muslims, encountered Abū Jahl, who was leading a caravan of the Quraish consisting of three hundred horsemen. However, Majdi ibn 'Umar al Juhani came between them and there was no fighting.
2. In *Shawwāl* of the same year, 'Ubaydah ibn Al-Hārith led sixty horsemen to the valley of Rābigh, and there he encountered two hundred idolaters led by Abū Sufyān. The two parties exchanged fire with arrows but there were no clashes.
3. In Dhul Q'ada, S'ad ibn Abī Waqqās led a party of about twenty men to intercept a caravan of the Quraish but he failed to catch it.

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[7] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: narrated by Al Ḥākim on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr.

4. In Ṣafar of the second year, the Prophet (ﷺ) himself went out on a mission after appointing S'ad ibn 'Ubādah as his deputy in Madīnah. He travelled until he reached Wadan, where he hoped to encounter the Quraish and the Banū Damrah, although he did not meet the Quraish, and he concluded an alliance with the Banū Damrah.
5. In Rabi'-1 of the same year, the Prophet (ﷺ) led two hundred of the *muhajirīn* and Anṣār to Buwat to intercept a caravan of the Quraish led by Umayyah ibn Khalaf consisting of one hundred men, but it escaped him.
6. In Jumāda he went to Al-'Ashīrah where he spent one month and concluded a peace treaty with the Banū Madlaj.
7. Then Karz ibn Jābir Al-Fihrī attacked Madīnah and carried away its cattle. Although the Prophet (ﷺ) followed him until he reached the valley of Safwān near Badr, he did not catch him. Historians call this "the first battle of Badr."

The wisdom behind sending out these expeditions in succession can be summarized into two points.

❑ Firstly, it made the idolaters and Jews of Madīnah and the desert Arabs around it feel that the Muslims were strong and that they had overcome their former weakness, that weakness which enabled the Quraish in Makkah to put a ban on their beliefs and liberties and seize their homes and properties. It was the Muslims' duty to take interest in these military demonstrations although they might be minor, since there were many people in Madīnah who were plotting against Islām and whom only fear could deter from their evil schemes. This is the explanation of Allāh's words:

﴾So that you can fail the enemy of Allāh and your enemy, and others beside them whom you do not know. Allāh knows them.﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 60)

❑ The last category mentioned in this *āyāh* (verse) is the hypocrites who hide their hatred for Islām and its followers. The only thing which prevents them from publicizing their hostility

is their cowardice and the evil consequences. The first category is the idolaters, desert thieves and others like them, who would have thought nothing of attacking Madīnah and violating its sanctity if there had not been these expeditions. It was possible for incidents such as that of Karz ibn Jābir to recur and for the desert Arabs to threaten Madīnah from time to time. These expeditions, however, destroyed any such evil intentions and maintained the awe of the Muslims.

❑ Secondly, those expeditions were a warning to the Quraish of the consequences of their folly. They had opposed Islām and were still continuing to do so. They had persecuted the Muslims in Makkah and they still remained steadfast in their error, refusing to allow anybody from Makkah to enter into Allāh's faith, and refusing to allow Islām to find a secure home anywhere else on earth. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted the rulers of Makkah to feel that this devilish plan of theirs could lead them only into serious misfortune and that the era had gone forever when they could attack the Muslims without any fear of reprisal.

❑ The European orientalists look upon these flying columns as if they were a kind of highway brigandry. This stand is a reflection of their malice, which blinds them to the realities and gives free rein to their emotions to speak and pass judgement in whatever way they like. This sort of one-track orientalism reminds me of an incident said to have taken place when the British suppressed the rebellion of the peoples in East Africa, the colony of Kenya, who were seeking freedom for their country and were trying to expel the foreigners.

❑ One British soldier said to another, describing these Africans: "They are wild beasts. Imagine: one of them bit me while I was killing him!" This story truly reflects how the orientalists think in their approval of the Makkans and lamentations at Islām and its origin.

The Expedition of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh

In Rajab of the second year of *Hijri* (era) the Prophet (ﷺ) sent ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh to lead a small group of *muhajirīn*. He handed him a letter and ordered him not to open it until he was two days away on his journey, when he read it, he should proceed with the orders therein and not force any of his men to come along with him.

❑ Thus ‘Abdullāh started off, and after two days he opened the letter which read: "Proceed until you arrive at Nakhlah between Makkah and Ṭā’if, and there you shall lie in wait for the Quraish and gather news of them for us."
‘Abdullāh said: "I hear and obey."

Then he showed the contents of the letter to his men, saying: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) forbade me to force any of you to come along. So whoever desires martyrdom, let him come with me, and whoever dislikes that let him return."

❑ No-one stayed behind. However, the camel which Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqās and ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān were riding had strayed, and so they went in search of it while ‘Abdullāh proceeded with the others until they arrived at Nakhlah. Soon a caravan of the Quraish passed and ‘Abdullāh and his men attacked it, killing ‘Amr ibn Al-Hadrami and captured two of the idolaters. ‘Abdullāh then returned to Madīnah with the caravan and the two prisoners.

❑ The incident apparently took place in the latter part of Rajab, that is, in the sacred month. When the party reported to the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: "I did not order you to fight during the sacred month."

And there was indecision over what to do with the caravan and prisoners.

❑ The idolaters found in this incident an opportunity to accuse the Muslims of disregarding what Allāh (ﷻ) had prohibited. There was much talk until Revelation descended, putting an end to the talk and supporting the action of ‘Abdullāh toward the idolaters.

﴾They question you [Muhammad] with regard to warfare in the sacred month. Say, "Warfare at that time is great [transgression]; but to turn [men] from the Way of Allāh, disbelieve in Him and in the Inviolable Place of Worship and to expel His people from it, is greater with Allāh; for persecution is worse than killing.﴿ Qur'ān 2: 217)[8]

❑ There is no justification for the clamour raised by the idolaters in order to cast doubt on the character of the Muslim fighters. Everything held sacred had already been violated when the same idolaters declared war on Islām and oppressed its followers. So what had brought back their sanctity to them all of a sudden so that their violation could be considered a shameful act? Were the Muslims not living in the sacred city when the idolaters were determined to assassinate their Prophet and steal the believers' properties? Some people appeal to the law when it is in their interests, but when their interests are threatened by these same laws they think nothing of violating them. Thus the only laws which are upheld by such people are those which serve their own vested interests.

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) has made it clear that the idolaters will not be deterred by either a sacred month or a sacred city for pursuing their original plan, which is to destroy the Muslims and leave not a vestige of their faith in existence. He (ﷻ) said:

﴾And they will not cease from fighting against you till they have made you renegades from your religion, if they can.﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 217)

❑ Then He (ﷻ) warned the Muslims against being defeatist in the face of these tyrannical forces and renouncing the faith with which Allāh (ﷻ) had honoured them. He made their happiness in this world and the Hereafter conditional on their remaining steadfast:

﴾And the one who becomes a renegade and dies in his disbelief, such are they whose works have fallen both in the world and in the Hereafter. Such are the rightful owners of the Fire: they will abide in it.﴿
(Qur'ān 2: 217)

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[8] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq.

❑ The Qur'ān extolled the action of 'Abdullāh and his men, since they faithfully and boldly carried out the orders of the Prophet (ﷺ) and penetrated deeply into the enemy's territory, thereby exposing themselves to death in the path of Allāh (ﷻ) willingly and without being forced. How could they then be rewarded for such with scolding and threats? Allāh (ﷻ) says about them:

﴾**Indeed! Those who believe, and those who emigrate [to escape the persecution] and strive in the way of Allāh, these have hope of Allāh's mercy; Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.**﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 218)

❑ The Qur'ān, in dealing with the events of this expedition, did not leave any room for leniency with the idolaters who had committed aggression, and this had a far-reaching effect on the Muslims and their enemies. Before that, all those conscripted into these flying columns were from the *muhajirīn*; afterwards, however, they consisted of both *muhajirīn* and Anṣār. In additions the fleeing grew that the expected struggle might be a protracted one and its consequences severe. Nevertheless, a desirable struggle, coupled with immediate or future benefits. Finally, Makkah realized that it was being taken to task for its past and future sins, and that its trade with Syria was at the mercy of the Muslims. Thus the gap between the two groups widened and hostility grew. It was as if all of these events were a preface for what was going to take place only a month later when the cream of Makkah clashed with the cream of Madīnah at the unappointed rendez-vous of Badr.

The Battle of Badr

The news reached Yathrib that a huge caravan of the Quraish was returning from Syria to Makkah, carrying enormous wealth belonging to its residents: a thousand camels loaded with goods and led by Abū Sufyān ibn Harb with a company of men not exceeding thirty or forty. The blow received by the people of Makkah if they lost this wealth would be painful indeed, and the

wealth would be sufficient compensation for the losses the Muslims had sustained during their last emigration.

Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Here is the caravan of the Quraish, containing their riches. So go out and intercept it; maybe Allāh (ﷻ) will give it to you as booty.[9]

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not order anybody to go along nor did he urge anyone who remained behind. He left the decision to the will of every individual. Then he set out with whoever was able to take part. Those who went with him on this occasion thought that this expedition would be nothing more than the previous ones. It never occurred to any of them that they were approaching one of the most significant events in the history of Islām. If they had known that, they would have made full preparations for it and not a single able bodied Muslim would have been allowed to remain in Madīnah. When other news came that the caravan had changed its route, their determination began to wane. Abū Sufyān had managed to save the caravan from certain disaster by changing the route after sending news to the people of Makkah, calling on them to defend their wealth and rousing their passions against the Muslims.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) tried hard to contain this waning of determination, and warned his followers of the consequences of turning back so quickly if the caravan slipped by and its owners came out to confront them. He insisted on the need to pursue the idolaters for as long as they could:

﴾Even as your Lord caused you [Muhammad] to go forth from your home with the truth, and indeed, a party of the believers were averse [to it]; "Disputing with you about the truth after it had been made manifest, as if they were being driven to death visible.﴿
(Qur'ān 8: 5-6)

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[9] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq with a sound chain traced back to Ibn 'Abbās.

Those who disliked facing the Quraish were not afraid of death, but they did not understand the wisdom behind waging a battle unawares without prior preparation. The Prophet (ﷺ), however, weighed all the circumstances of the affair, and found that it would be better to proceed than to retreat. Therefore, he was determined to forge ahead, since the reason for mobilizing these armed parties would have been lost in vain if they had returned in such a manner.

❑ The feelings of uncertainty disappeared all of a sudden and they all proceeded lightly to their destination. Travelling along the caravan route to Badr was not at all easy. The distance between Madīnah and Badr was over 100 miles, and the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions had only seventy camels, which they took turns at riding. Aḥmad narrated on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd who said:

"On the day of Badr, we were three to a camel, that is, taking turns. Abū Lababah and 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) were sharing a camel with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

When it was the Prophet's (ﷺ) turn, they said: "We shall walk instead of you.

However, he replied: "You two are no stronger than I am to walk, and I am no less in need of the reward than you."

❑ The Muslims sent their spies to ascertain the position of the caravan and the men who had come out to defend it. Abū Sufyān, when he was aware of the dangers to his caravan, sent Damdam ibn 'Amr al-Ghifari to Makkah to urge the people to defend their wealth.

Damdam was able to arouse the entire town: he stood upon his camel after cutting off its nose, reversed his saddle and rent his shirt. Then he cried: "O people of the Quraish! The caravan! The caravan! Your wealth with Abū Sufyān has been attacked by Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions! I don't think you'll reach it in time! Help! Help!" Everyone hurriedly made preparations and either went himself or sent someone in his

place. Nine hundred and fifty fighters in all departed, and with them were two hundred horses, which they rode. Female singers also came along, beating drums and singing satires about the Muslims. They turned to the north in search of the caravan which was to pass by Yathrib on its way home.

❑ However, Abū Sufyān did not delay in waiting for the expected help. He exerted his utmost caution and skill in resisting the Muslims and escaping from their reach. He had almost fallen headlong with his caravan into their hands as they were proceeding towards Badr, but luck was with him.

❑ It is narrated that he met Majdi ibn 'Amr and asked him: "Have you noticed anyone?"

❑ Majdi replied: " I have not seen any strangers, except two riders who dismounted from their camels on this hillock, drank from a container of theirs, then set off again."

❑ Abū Sufyān came to the spot where they had dismounted, and , taking the camels' dung in his hand, he split it and found that it contained a date seed. Then he said: "By God, this is the fodder of Yathrib." He immediately realized that the two men were Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) and that his army was close by. He therefore returned to the caravan and changed its route to the coast, leaving Badr on his left and thus he escaped. Seeing that the caravan was now safe, he sent to the Quraish, saying: "You have come out to defend your caravan, your men and your wealth. Now God has saved them, so go back.

❑ However, Abū Jahl said: "We shall surely not return home until we reach Badr, camp three days there, slaughter camels, feast and drink wine and have the girls sing and dance for us. The Arabs must hear of us and our march and continue to fear us forever."

❑ This announcement made by Abū Jahl was the very thing which the Prophet (ﷺ) was trying to prevent. The Quraish consolidation of its position and the spread of its influence in these parts, after what it had done to the Muslims, could be

considered a catastrophe for Islām and might contain its growth. In fact, was there any other reason for the sending of expeditions and reconnoitering parties from Madīnah except to raise high the banner of Allāh (ﷻ), disgrace the banner of idolatry, and to expose the idolaters as incapable of inflicting any harm or benefit? For this reason the Prophet (ﷺ) did not pay attention to the escaping caravan as much as he did to the need for scouring the region with arms and instilling the awe of the Muslims into the hearts of the people nearby.

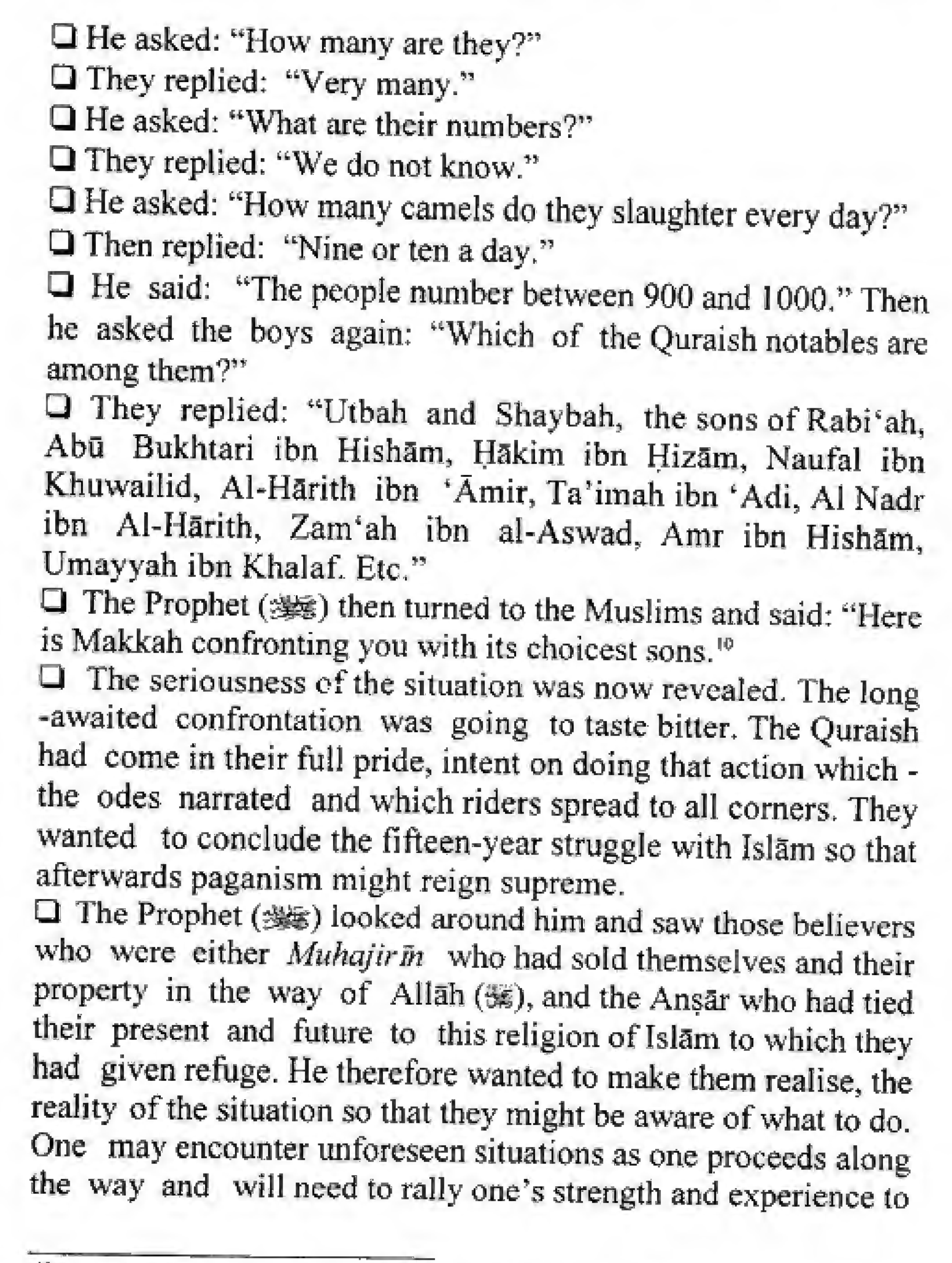
❑ The Quraish advanced in positive response to Abū Jahl's advice until they arrived at the far bank of the oasis of Badr. In the meantime, after their strenuous journey the Muslims had camped at the bank of the oasis. Thus the two forces drew close to each other, not knowing what would be the result of this awesome meeting.

❑ Night came on and the Prophet (ﷺ) sent 'Alī (رضي الله عنه), Al Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) and Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) to survey the surroundings and seek news. They encountered two young slaves of the Qurayish, whose duty was to provide water for them.

They brought them back to the camp, and began questioning them while the Prophet (ﷺ) was praying. The boys said that they were water carriers for the Quraish and that they had been sent in search of water. The Muslims disliked this piece of news: they were hoping that the boys would be from Abū Sufyān's caravan, for some of them still had hopes of capturing the caravan. They questioned the two boys painfully until they had no choice but to say that they had been sent by Abū Sufyān, then they left them alone.

The Prophet (ﷺ) completed his prayers, and then said: When they tell you the truth, you beat them; and when they lie to you, you leave them alone? ! By Allāh (ﷻ), they spoke the truth when they said that they were from the Quraish." Then he turned to the boys and asked them: "What news do you have of the Quraish?

❑ They said: "they are behind this mound that you see."



❑ He asked: "How many are they?"
❑ They replied: "Very many."
❑ He asked: "What are their numbers?"
❑ They replied: "We do not know."
❑ He asked: "How many camels do they slaughter every day?"
❑ Then replied: "Nine or ten a day."
❑ He said: "The people number between 900 and 1000." Then he asked the boys again: "Which of the Quraish notables are among them?"
❑ They replied: "Utbah and Shaybah, the sons of Rabi'ah, Abū Bukhtari ibn Hishām, Ḥākim ibn Ḥizām, Naufal ibn Khuwailid, Al-Hārith ibn 'Āmir, Ta'imah ibn 'Adi, Al Nadr ibn Al-Hārith, Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad, Amr ibn Hishām, Umayyah ibn Khalaf. Etc."
❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) then turned to the Muslims and said: "Here is Makkah confronting you with its choicest sons.[10]
❑ The seriousness of the situation was now revealed. The long -awaited confrontation was going to taste bitter. The Quraish had come in their full pride, intent on doing that action which - the odes narrated and which riders spread to all corners. They wanted to conclude the fifteen-year struggle with Islām so that afterwards paganism might reign supreme.
❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) looked around him and saw those believers who were either *Muhajirīn* who had sold themselves and their property in the way of Allāh (ﷻ), and the Anṣār who had tied their present and future to this religion of Islām to which they had given refuge. He therefore wanted to make them realise, the reality of the situation so that they might be aware of what to do. One may encounter unforeseen situations as one proceeds along the way and will need to rally one's strength and experience to

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[10] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq. Its chain is sound but it is *mursal*. Aḥmad also narrated it on the authority of 'Alī ibn Ṭālib without the last question and this version also has a sound chain. Muslim has a shortened version of it on the authority of Anas (ﷺ).

face them. These sudden tests prove a person's real worth, more so than the tests which can be prepared for. Thus the Muslims who had gone out on an easy task suddenly found themselves confronted with a hard test.

❑ Their senses awakened to it and they began to examine quickly what it called for and what would be its results. The old certainty was aroused and it steered the people to take that unique step which a believer would inevitably take. The Prophet (ﷺ) consulted with the gathering and Abū Bakr (ؓ) stood up and spoke positively. Then 'Umar (ؓ) stood up and he too spoke positively.

Then Al-Miqdād ibn 'Amr stood up and said: " O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)! Proceed to wherever Allāh (ﷻ) guides you for we are with you. By Allāh (ﷻ), we shall not tell you what the Banū Isra'il (ؑ) told Moosa (ؑ): 'Go you and your Lord and fight while we remain seated here, instead, we say:'Go you and your Lord and fight and we shall be fighting with you'. I swear by Him who sent you with the truth, if you took us to Birk Al-Ghimad we should fight with you against any one who blocked our path until we are able to reach it."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) thanked him and made a supplication for him. Then he said: "Advice me, O people." By this he was referring to the Anṣār, since they were in the majority and at the Pledge of '*Aqabah* they had said: Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)! We are not under obligation to you until you reach our land. When you reach us you will be under our protection-and we shall defend you from that, which we defend our wives and children. The Prophet (ﷺ) was thus afraid that the Anṣār might not think it necessary to fight on his behalf unless he was attacked at Madīnah.

❑ When he said that, however, Sa'd Ibn M'ādh replied: By Allāh (ﷻ), perhaps you are referring to us, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)? When the Prophet (ﷺ) replied in the affirmative, he continued: "We have believed in you and accepted what you say. We have testified that what you have brought is the truth,

and on the basis of that we have given you our pledge and sworn to hear and obey you. So proceed, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), to do whatever you will, for we are with you. By Him (ﷻ) who sent you with the truth, if you approached the sea with us and dived into it, we should dive into it with you and not a single man would remain behind. We are not against your confronting the enemy with us tomorrow. We are steadfast in war, truthful in meeting. Perhaps Allāh (ﷻ) will show you something of us which will gladden your heart. So proceed with the blessings of Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ In another version the words reported are: "Perhaps you went out for one purpose and Allāh (ﷻ) caused something else to happen. So look at that which Allāh (ﷻ) has caused to happen and proceed. Accept whom you will and reject whom you will; oppose whom you will and conclude peace with whom you will; take from our wealth what you will and give us what you will. What you take from us is more precious to us than what you leave."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) was pleased with Sa'd's (رضي الله عنه) reply, and so he said:

"Go forward and be cheerful. Allāh (ﷻ) had promised me one of the two parties. By Allāh (ﷻ), it is as if I can already see the places where those people will die.[11]

❑ The Muslims prepared to go into battle, and they camped in front of the wells at Badr.

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[11] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. The second version was narrated by Ibn Mardawaih and it is mursal. In this way it was also narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah, as recorded in *Fath al Bari*. Bukhārī, Al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad narrated the account of this story on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, while Al-Ṭabarāni narrated it on the authority of Abū Ayyub Al-Anṣārī. About the latter, Al-Haythami says that its chain is good.

❑ In the previous footnote, mentioned is made of a Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim on the authority of Anas (رضي الله عنه). In this Ḥadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported as saying: "This is the place where so and so shall die."

The narrator added that he put his hand on the ground in various places, and, continued, not one of them was found in any other position.

Al-Habbāb ibn Al-Mundhir came up to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "Is this a place where Allāh (ﷻ) has put you and thus we are not permitted to move forwards or backwards? Or is it an opinion, war and strategy."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "It is indeed opinion, war and strategy.

Al Habbāb then said: "Well, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), this is no position. Lead the group onwards until you reach the wells closest to the enemy. Let us camp there and fill up all the wells behind us. Then let us build a cistern and fill it with water. So when we fight the enemy, we shall be able to drink and they will have no water."

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"You have indeed given us good advice," and he ordered it to be executed. Before midnight they had acted upon Al-Habbāb's suggestion and occupied the wells.[12]

❑ The Muslims spent a night which was quiet and encouraging for them. Confidence filled their hearts and they were able to have a full night's rest. A light rain fell upon them and moistened the atmosphere, and the early morning breeze blew upon them, refreshing their hearts and renewing their spirits. Even the sand below their feet was made firm by the rain and it allowed them easy movement.

﴾When he made the slumber fall upon you as a reassurance from Him and sent down water from the sky upon you, that thereby He might purify you and remove from you the fear of Satan, and make strong your hearts and firm [your] feet thereby.﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 11)

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[12] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq, who said: "So I was told of the men from the Banū Salmāh that they mentioned that Al-Habbab..." This is a weak chain since the link between Ibn Isḥāq and the men from the Banū Salmah is not known. Al-Ḥākim narrated it with a complete chain, although there was someone in it whom I could not recognize, and Al Dhahabī said it was a rejected Ḥadīth. Also Al-Amawi narrated it on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, as was reported in *Al-Bidayah*. However, there is Al-Kalbi in the chain and he was a liar.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) was solicitous of his men: he arranged their ranks, gave advice and reminded them of Allāh (ﷻ) and the Hereafter. Then he returned to the hut which had been prepared for him and engrossed himself in humble supplication, seeking the help of the Almighty. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) was standing by his side when he unceasingly implored Allāh (ﷻ), saying: O Allāh (ﷻ), if this band of men are to die, there will be no-one left to worship you on earth. He continued imploring with the following words: "O Allāh (ﷻ), fulfill what You have promised me. O Allāh (ﷻ), grant us victory. While saying these words, he raised his hands to the heavens until his cloak fell from his shoulders.

Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) stood behind him, setting his cloak aright and saying in concern: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), enough of imploring your Lord. He will surely fulfill His (ﷻ) promise to you.[13]

❑ The two armies marched towards each other and the idolaters began the attack. Al-Aswad ibn 'Abdul Asad made a dash for the cistern which the Muslims had built, saying: "I pledge to God that I shall drink from their cistern or destroy it or die in the attempt. Ḥamzah ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib met him with his sword, taking one of his legs off. But he continued to hop toward the pool, followed by Ḥamzah. At this point 'Utbah and Shaybah, the sons of Rabi'ah, and Al-Walid ibn 'Utbah came forward from among the idolaters and they were challenged by three youths from the Anṣār.

They shouted: "Muhammad (ﷺ), send out our equals from our own people.

❑ Another version says that the Prophet (ﷺ) himself recalled the three youths since he wished that the enemy should be faced first by his own relatives on such an occasion. He thus said: "Arise, 'Ubaydah ibn-ul Hārith; arise, Ḥamzah; arise, 'Alī (رضي الله عنه). 'Ubaydah fought with 'Utbah, Ḥamzah fought with Shaybah, and 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) fought with Al-Walīd. Ḥamzah and 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) killed their

[13] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad on the authority of 'Umar Ibn-al Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه). Part of it is in Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

opponents, but 'Ubaydah and 'Utbah both wounded each other. Then Ḥamzah and 'Alī (ﷺ) came to the help of 'Ubaydah, finished off his opponent and took him back behind the line. They laid him at the feet of the Prophet (ﷺ).

He put his cheek against the Prophet's (ﷺ) feet[14] and said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), if Abū Ṭālib saw me, he would know that I am more worthy of his statement: 'We protect him till we die in the effort though we may neglect our children and wives. He then breathed his last."[15]

❑ The unbelievers were so enraged at the sad beginning of their encounter that they bombarded the Muslims with a shower of arrows. Then the battle intensified and swords clashed. The Muslims shouted "*Aḥad*, *Aḥad*," and the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered them to break the attacks of the enemy. The Muslims were all fixed in their stations, and so he told them that if the enemy tried to charge them, they should repel them with arrows and not rush towards them unless the order was given.[16]

❑ As the battle was nearing its peak, the Muslims had by that time exhausted the enemy's strength and dealt them some heavy losses. The Prophet (ﷺ), still in his hut, was supplicating to Allāh (ﷻ) and watching the heroic efforts of his men.

Ibn Isḥāq said:[17]

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[14] Up to here Ibn Hishām narrated from Ibn Isḥāq without chain. It was also narrated by Abū Dāwūd on the authority of 'Alī (ﷺ) without the story of *Al-Aswad*, but its chain is sound. Likewise it was narrated by Aḥmad.

[15] This amount is quoted by Ibn Kathīr, who said that Shāfi'i narrated it. However, he did not say on whose authority. Al-Ḥākim narrated a similar account on the authority of Ibn Hibāb in *mursal* form and it did not have the addition. "Then he breathed his last." What shows the weakness of this addition is that Al-Ḥākim reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās that 'Ubaydah died at Al Safra while on his way from Badr and the Prophet (ﷺ) buried him there. The chain of this Ḥadīth is good, and Al-Ḥākim and Al Dhahabī authenticated it.

[16] Narrated by Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. Bukhārī reported on the authority of Abū Usayd: "On the day of Badr the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to us: 'When they attack you, shoot them with arrows and remain in your positions.

[17] In his Al-Mughāzi and also by Ibn Hishām without a chain. However, Al-Amawi also narrated with a full chain which is considered a good chain.

"In his hut the Prophet's (ﷺ) head drooped, and after a short while he was alert again and saying: "Glad tidings, O Abū Bakr (ﷺ). The help of Allāh (ﷻ) has come. Here is Jibrīl (ﷺ) holding the reins of his horse and spurring it on into the midst of the battle!"

❑ Dust gathered over the heads of the fighters, who were in a state of attack and retreat: the army of truth displaying courage in support of Allāh's faith, and the army of falsehood possessed by the delusion that they could vanquish truth. No wonder, therefore, that the angels of goodness should descend, fill the hearts of the Muslims with the spirit of certainty and urge them to be steadfast and courageous.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) came out of his hut to his men and urged them on with the following words:

"By Him in Whose hands is Muhammad's (ﷺ) life, if any man fights them today and is killed while displaying steadfastness and hope in Allāh (ﷻ), advancing and not retreating, Allāh (ﷻ) will surely bring him into paradise."

Contemplation of the Hereafter is the commodity which the Prophet (ﷺ) offered. However, is there any rest for the upholders of faith and the redeemers of truth except over there? This call had its effect on the believing hearts.

❑ Aḥmad narrated[18] that as the idolaters were approaching, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his Companions: "Arise towards a paradise whose extent is that of the heavens and the earth.

❑ Upon hearing this, 'Umayr ibn-ul Hamām Al-Anṣārī declared: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), a paradise whose extent is that of the heavens and the earth?" When the Prophet (ﷺ) replied yes, he said, "*Bakh, Bakh*" (an expression of wonder and pleasure). The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him why he said "*Bakh, Bakh*, and he replied: "By Allāh, (ﷻ), O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), it is only with the hope that I shall be one of its inmates.

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[18] In his *Musnad* without the couplets of poetry. Similarly, it was narrated by Muslim and Al-Ḥākim, all three narrating it on the authority of Anas (ﷺ). Muslim has a shorter version also from Al-Barra ibn 'Azib. As for the couplets, Ibn Kathīr ascribed them to Ibn Jarīr.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) responded: "Then surely you shall be one of them.

❑ He then took out some dates which he had in his horn and began eating them. Then he said: "If I live to finish eating these dates of mine, it will be a long life. He flung his dates away and entered into the battle, saying these lines of poetry:

"We hastened to Allāh (ﷻ) without provision to piety and striving for the Hereafter
And determined *jihād* in Allāh's way,
For all provision is bound to be exhausted
Save piety and righteousness and uprightness."
He fought until he was killed.[19]

❑ The ranks of the idolaters weakened under the hammer-blows of this faith which showed no love for worldly glitter, and they were stunned by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself who descended into the thick of the battle and fought boldly. With him, his Companions pressed on towards the enemy, not fearing anything. The Quraish collapsed and were overcome by fright. And the Prophet (ﷺ), upon seeing the leaders of the Quraish wallowing in the dust, cried out: "May their faces be disfigured."

❑ Thus were the Quraish defeated. Reference is made to this in the Qur'ān:

﴿When your Lord inspired the angels [saying]: I am with you. So make those who believe stand firm. I shall throw fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Then cut off their necks and cut off each of their fingers. That is because they opposed Allāh and His Messenger. He who opposes Allāh and His Messenger, [for him] indeed, Allāh is Severe in punishment. That [is the reward], so taste it, and [know] that for disbelievers is the torment of the Fire.﴾ (Qur'ān 8: 12-14)

❑ Abū Jahl attempted to stop the flood of defeat which was descending on his people. He shouted to them, the blindfold of

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[19] A good Ḥadīth, which is part of the above-mentioned Ḥadīth narrated by Al-Amawi. There is another Ḥadīth which supports it and it is that of Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām. Al-Haythami says: Al Ṭabarāni narrated it and its chain is good."

delusion still covering his eyes: "By Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzza, we shall not return until we scatter them on the mountains. Take them by force." However, what can cries of despair do in front of the sweeping realities? Nevertheless, the truth must be told: Abū Jahl was a pillar of stubborness till his last breath. The blindness which blanketed his perception was an integral part of him. Thus he advanced, fighting with ferocity and anger, and saying:

"What revenge can a wild war take of me?
Exceeding two years is the talk of my age.
For such did my mother give birth to me."

❑ The remnants of the Quraish gathered around him saying: "No-one will reach Abul Ḥakam. He was in the midst of a thick forest. Nevertheless, this forest soon lost tree after tree in face of the zeal of the believers, who were spurred on by the news of victory, and whose cries of "*Aḥad*, *Aḥad*!" filled the air.

❑ 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn 'Auf said:

"I was in the ranks on the day of Badr. When I turned round, there, on my right and left were two youths.

I was starting to feel insecure between them when one of them said softly to me so that the other could not hear: "Uncle! Show me Abū Jahl.

I said: "My son, what do you want with him?"

He said: "I have sworn to Allāh (ﷻ), that if I see him I shall kill him or die in the attempt." The other youth said something similar to that, trying not to let the first one hear."

'Abdul-Raḥmān continued:

"I could not have been more pleased if I was standing between two men other than them. So I pointed him (Abū Jahl) out to them and they darted at him like two hawks, hitting him until he was dead. They were the sons of 'Afrā."[20]

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[20] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and Aḥmad. Al-Ḥākim mistakenly included it in his *Mustadrak* (his compilation of sound Ḥadīth not mentioned by Bukhārī or Muslim). The statement "They were the sons of 'Afrā" was mentioned like this in one of Bukhārī's versions, whereas the others had "and the two men were Mu'ādh ibn 'Amr ibn-ul Jamuh and Mu'adh ibn 'Afrā. This was also one of Bukhārī's versions. Perhaps the first version mentioned the sons of 'Afrā by way of brevity. See also *Fath-al Bari*.

❑ It seems that they left him on the verge of death. The two young heroes were martyred in this battle, and the Prophet (ﷺ) stood over their dead bodies, praying for them and recounting their action.[21] As for Abū Jahl, he fell to the ground gasping for breath. Upon this, the idolaters scattered and took to their heels in the desert just as the wind will scatter a mound of sand.

❑ 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd passed by the dead and found Abū Jahl among them with still some breath of life in him. So he jumped upon him with the intention of finishing him off. Abū Jahl stirred and asked who was having the upper hand.

❑ 'Abdullāh replied: "Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ)." Then he continued: "Have you tasted the humiliation from Allāh (ﷻ), enemy of Allāh (ﷻ)?"

❑ Abū Jahl replied: "And how did He humiliate me? Is there any man stronger than the one who is killed by his own people? Then he peered at 'Abdullāh and said: "Aren't you the little shepherd boy in Makkah?" 'Abdullāh dealt him some blows with his sword until he was cold.[22] The same humiliating fate met seventy of the Makkan stalwarts of unbelief and seventy more fell captive into the hands of the Muslims. The remnants of the nine hundred and fifty fled to tell their countrymen that the consequences of evil were evil, and that pride resulted in shame and ignominy.

❑ The Muslims opened their eyes to the welcome sight of victory smiling at them through the heavens and the earth. It had given back to them life, hope and dignity and rid them of heavy burdens.

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[21] To insist on this is a clear mistake since it comes from the account of Al-Wāqidi without a chain as Ibn Kathīr stated. Even if he had quoted the chain and it had been strong, It would still not be correct, since Al-Wāqidi was suspected of being a liar. What points to the weakness of this account too is the fact that Mu'adh ibn 'Amr died during the reign of 'Uthmān, as Bukhārī and others have positively stated. (See Ibn Hishām).

[22] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. Part of it is in the *Musnad* (of Aḥmad) and Al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd with an incomplete chain. However, the story of Ibn Mas'ūd killing of Abū Jahl is authentic and was narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and Aḥmad on the authority of Anas (ﷺ).

﴾Allāh had already given you the victory at Badr, when you were contemptible. So observe your duty to Allāh so that you may be thankful.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 123)

❑ The number of martyrs among them was fourteen. Allāh's mercy had selected them and taken them to *'Illiyīn*. Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) reported that Hāritha ibn Surāqah was killed on the day of Badr by a stray arrow while on guard.

His mother came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and Said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), tell me about Ḥāritha. If he is in *Jannah* I shall be patient, but if not, then Allāh (ﷻ) will see what I'll do" (That is, wailing). And she was not yet deprived.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "Woe you! Are you bereft of your son? Those are wonderful gardens and your son has attained the highest garden in paradise.[23]

If this was the reward for the guards who were hit by stray arrows, then what about those who plunged into the thick of the battle and were killed?

❑ In this battle fathers faced sons, and brothers faced brothers. They disagreed on principles and swords settled their differences. In our times the communists fought their fellow citizens and tore apart the closest of human bonds for the sake of their beliefs. It was therefore no surprise to see a believing son angry at his unbelieving father and disputing with him about Allāh (ﷻ). The battle at Badr recorded several instances of such happenings.

❑ Abū Bakr (ﷺ) was with the Prophet (ﷺ) and his son with Abū Jahl was fighting against him. 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah was the first to challenge the Muslims to a fight, while his son Abū Ḥudhayfah was one of the closest Companions to the Prophet (ﷺ). When the body of 'Utbah was lifted to be thrown into the pit (dug for the bodies), the Prophet (ﷺ) looked at Abū Hudhayfah and noticed he was pale and sad.

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[23] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī.

He said to him: "Abū Ḥudhayfah, are you upset, perhaps, about the way your father died?"

❑ He replied: "No, by Allāh (ﷻ). O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I have no doubts about my father or his death. However, I had known my father to possess sound logic, forbearance and virtue, and I used to hope that, that would guide him to Islām. So I was sad when I saw what had happened to him and how he had died in the state of unbelief in spite of the hopes I had in him. Upon this the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for Abū Ḥudhayfah and spoke kindly to him.[24]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the bodies of the idolaters to be thrown into the pit, and it is narrated that upon seeing them he said: "What a bad lot you were to your Prophet, as relatives of a prophet. You disbelieved me whereas other people believed me, you expelled me whereas others gave me shelter, you fought against whereas other assisted me.[25]

❑ When the bodies were covered with earth, the people went away feeling that their religion and the rest of the world were now safe from the evils of the leaders of unbelief. The Prophet (ﷺ), however, reflected on the long history of his struggle with these people: how much he had endeavoured to open their minds and gave them guidance, and how much he had reminded them about Allāh (ﷻ), warned them of the consequences of disobeying Him and recited to them his Revelation. In spite of the detailed reminders, they remained stubborn, and even ridiculed Allāh (ﷻ), His signs and His Prophet (ﷺ). Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) went out into the darkness of the night and when

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[24] A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain.

[25] A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq, who said: "Some learned people informed me. Aḥmad also reported it by way of Ibrāhīm on the authority of 'Ā'ishah, who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying: "May Allāh (ﷻ) reward you with evil, from the people of a prophet (ﷺ). How evil was your dismissal (of him) and how strong was the disbelief and refutation." Narrators are trustworthy but there is the breach between Ibrāhīm, who is Al Nakhā'ī, and 'Ā'ishah.

he reached the pit, his Companions heard him saying:[26]

"O people of the pit! O 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah, O Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, O Umayyah ibn Khalaf, O Abū Jahl ibn Hishām: have you found what your Lord promised you to be true? Surely I have found what my Lord promised me to be true."

❑ The Muslims asked: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), are you addressing people whose bones are rotting?"

❑ He replied: "You are no more capable than they of hearing what I say, except that they cannot answer."[27]

❑ The incident of Badr took place on 17 Ramaḍān in the second year after the Hijrah. The Prophet (ﷺ) spent three days at Badr. Then he headed for Madīnah steering the prisoners and booty in front of him. He thought it advisable to send the good news in advance to the Muslims in Madīnah who were unaware of what had taken place. So he selected 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah and Zayd ibn Ḥārithah as the bearers of the good tidings to the people.

❑ Usāmah ibn Zayd said: "The news reached us just as we finished levelling the earth over Ruqayyah, daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ)." Her husband, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affan (ﷺ), had stayed behind to nurse her upon the Prophet's (ﷺ) orders, and the Prophet (ﷺ) gave him his full share of the reward and booty acquired at Badr.[28]

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[26] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Isḥāq from Ḥumayd from Anas (ﷺ). Ḥumayd is known for his *Tadlis* (i.e, reporting from someone from whom he did not hear directly). However, whenever he reported from Anas (ﷺ), then there was Thābit Al-Banāni in between, and he was a trustworthy source of Bukhārī and Muslim. Aḥmad narrated it also from various sources from Humayd, and Ibn Kathīr said it was according to the criteria of Bukhārī and Muslim. As for 'Ā'ishah's rejection of this Ḥadīth, it is rejected by the scholars, who explain that logic is on the side of those who narrates this Ḥadīth. See *Al-Bidayah* of Ibn Kathīr and *Al-Fatḥ* of Ibn Ḥajr. In my opinion there is no contradiction between their narration and hers. This has been explained in *Aḥkam al-Janā'iz* wa *Bida'uha* (forthcoming).

[27] 'Ā'ishah rejected this Ḥadīth, using as an argument the Qur'ānic āyah (verse): "You cannot reach those who are in the graves" (Qur'ān 35: 22). She said that the words used by the Prophet (ﷺ) were: "You have no more knowledge than they of what I say."

[28] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Al-Bayhaqi with a sound chain from Usāmah. Al Ḥākim narrated it in a similar manner from Al Zuhrī as *mursal*. There are other ḥadīths on the same topic. (See *Al-Majma'*)

Assessment and Scolding

In spite of the endurance and mutual consolation of the Anṣār and *muhajirīn* as recorded in history, the new society nevertheless felt the burdens of privation and the difficulties of poverty spreading throughout it. If abstinence covered it at one time, then it exposed it at others. The crises which accompany the formation of a state from nothing amid nations who plot against it and seize every opportunity to attack it must be expected, minds must be made up to face them and the sharp feelings towards them must not be allowed to weaken one's character and quell one's determination.

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) took the Muslims to task before and after Badr for certain behaviour which was manifest among them and of which they were to purify themselves, no matter how strong the reasons or justification might have been for it. The day they left Yathrib to meet the idolaters of Makkah, their desires were centred on the capturing of the caravan which contained treasures and precious articles. It was true that they had been expelled from their homes and properties, and that they had sacrificed their lives and children on behalf of Allāh (ﷻ). So let them continue along the path of sacrifice until the final stage, and however much poverty might bite them with its fangs, let the punishment of the unbelievers be more weighty on their scales than the capturing of booty.

﴾And when Allah promised you that one of the two bands [of the enemy] should be yours, you wished that other than the armed one might be yours. And Allah willed that he should cause the truth to triumph by his word, and cut the root of the disbelievers.﴿
(Qur'ān 8: 7)

❑ Along the same lines was their race after victory to gather up the booty and the attempt of each group to take away the lion's share. 'Ubādah ibn-al-Ṣāmit reported:

"We went out with the Prophet (ﷺ) and I witnessed Badr with him. The armies clashed and Allāh (ﷻ) defeated the enemy.

A group of men went after them in pursuit and killed them while another group pounced upon the booty, claiming it and gathering it up. Another group remained with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), protecting him so that the enemy might not attack him unawares.

When night fell and all the men gathered together, those who had collected the booty said: "We collected it and there is no share in it for anyone else."

Those who had pursued the enemy said: "You do not have a stronger claim to it than we do, for we kept the enemy away from it and defeated them.

Those who had guarded the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "We were afraid that the enemy might attack him unawares, so we were busy protecting him."

Upon that Allāh (ﷻ) Revealed:

﴿**They ask you [Muhammad] about war. Say: The spoils of war belong to Allāh and the Messenger, so keep your duty to Allāh, reconcile your differences, and obey Allāh and His Messenger, if you are [true] believers.**﴾ (Qur'ān 8: 1)

And the Prophet (ﷺ) divided it among the Muslims.[29]

❑ This sad conflict came after the widespread calamity which befell the *muhajirīn* as well as the Anṣār. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) noticed the symptoms of this calamity on his Companions as they were heading for Badr and took pity on their condition, and he petitioned Allāh (ﷻ) to remove their misfortune. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) left for Badr with 313 of his

[29] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Ḥākim by way of Makḥūl from Abū Umamah from 'Ubadah ibn-al-Ṣāmit. Al-Ḥākim said it was sound according to the criteria of Muslim, and Dhahabī agreed with this. However, Abū Umamah was never seen by Makḥūl, as Abū Ḥātim said. Thus the Ḥadīth is cut off. Ibn Ḥishām narrated it from Ibn Isḥāq with the same chain, and Aḥmad narrated it from him. It is supported by the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās narrated by Abū Dāwūd and Al-Ḥākim. The latter said its chain was sound, and Dhahabī agreed with him. What they say is correct and therefore the Ḥadīth is authentic.

Companions. When he reached it, he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), they are hungry, so feed them; O Allāh (ﷻ), they are barefoot, so provide them with mounts; O Allāh (ﷻ), they are naked, so clothe them. Allāh (ﷻ) granted him victory on the day of Badr, and when they headed for home there was not a single man among them who did not return with a mount or two, having clothed himself and eaten.[30]

❑ When hunger and lack of warm clothing are prolonged, they leave evil scars on the heart and push one's thoughts into a dark, narrow channel. Nevertheless, it must be noted that if such crises overwhelm the masses, incite them to seek food and clothing for themselves and their children with eagerness and outspokenness, the staunch believers on the contrary ought to control themselves, contain the pressing hunger pangs and not allow themselves to quarrel over anything.

❑ It was this etiquette which Allāh (ﷻ) called on the Muslims to adopt, and with which he opened the chapter which speaks of the fighting at Badr. This is because the chosen few are examples for others, and if they display a bad character on account of passing difficulties, then the mass of the people will be the quicker to fall into the pit of chaos and confusion. We have the example of the Germans in the First World War and the British in the Second World War. They were besieged until their bodies became emaciated and faces became pale. Nevertheless, the masses were able to stand these famines only because of their persevering leaders who bore all the hardships.

❑ One of the matters for which Allāh (ﷻ) took the Muslims seriously to task was their attitude toward the prisoners. The desire to keep them alive to benefit from their wealth prevailed over the other opinions which called for the punishment of the prisoners on account of their previous wrongs, so that they

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30 A good Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Al-Ḥākim and Al-Bayhaqi. Al-Ḥākim said it was sound according to the criteria of Muslim, although in fact it is only good (*ḥasan*). Ibn Ḥajar verified that it was "good" in his *Al-Fatḥ*.

might be an example to those before and after them and an admonishment to the believers.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) had consulted Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and 'Alī (رضي الله عنه), and Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) had said:

"O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), these are our cousins, relatives and brothers. I think that you should take a ransom from them so that whatever we take may strengthen us against the unbelievers. Perhaps Allāh (ﷻ) may guide them to Islām so that they become our supporters!"

The Prophet (ﷺ) then asked 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) for his opinion and he replied:

"By Allāh (ﷻ), I disagree with Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه). I think you should hand over so-and-so (a relative) to me and let me chop off his head; hand over 'Aquīl ibn Abi Ṭālib to 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) and let him chop off his head; and hand over so-and-so (his brother) to Ḥamzah and let him chop off his head. Then Allāh (ﷻ) will know that there is no indulgence in our hearts towards the idolaters, and these are their notables, commanders and ringleaders."

❑ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) felt inclined to Abū Bakr's (رضي الله عنه) suggestion and so he took a ransom from the prisoners. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated what happened the next day. He said:

"Next morning I went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and found them weeping. I said: 'O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), tell me why you and your Companion are weeping? If I see any reason to weep I shall weep too. But if not, I shall pretend to weep because the two of you are weeping.

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) replied, "The suggestion of your companions to take a ransom was almost the cause of their being punished, and it came closer than this tree which is nearby." Upon that Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following āyāt (verses):

﴾It is not for any prophet to have captives until he has made slaughter in the land. You desire the lure of this world and Allāh desires [for you] the Hereafter, and Allāh is Mighty, Wise. Had it not been for an ordinance of Allah which had gone before, a fearful

doom would have come upon you on account of what you took.﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 67-68)[31]

❑ Falling into captivity does not mean the issuing of a general amnesty for all the crimes perpetrated by the captives during their days of liberty. This band of Makkan notables had a terrible past of scoffing Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger. Their status had made them puffed up with pride and they had led the masses of Makkan people into a war which had no cause. So how could they be let loose after the Muslim hands had the opportunity to strangle them?

❑ Was it because they had wealth to ransom themselves? It was not right for the Muslims to look towards these trifling gains and forget the excesses committed by these unbelievers against Allāh (ﷻ). They were war criminals, to use the modern term, not prisoners of war. The Qur'ān itself exposed their treachery to their people, besides the fact that they had shown ingratitude for the bounties which Allāh (ﷻ) had bestowed on them. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴾**Have you not seen those who gave the grace of Allāh in exchange for thankless and led their people down to the Abode of Loss, [even to] hell? Thus they are exposed. A hapless end.**﴿ (Qur'ān 14: 28-29)

❑ There are other texts which decree that captives should be treated nicely and fed properly, and merciful laws have been promulgated towards this end. However, these laws concern the masses of captives who are the followers. As for those who trade in war in order to satisfy their personal desires, they must be extirpated and that is what is meant by slaughter in the land.

❑ Just as civilization advances on account of the good people, similarly it suffers delay on account of the bad elements. If it is right for a tree to be trimmed in order to grow, then it is right for civilization in order to progress, to be cleansed of the fool arrogant people and sinners. No fleeting benefit can take the place of this right, not even tons of gold. Allāh (ﷻ) made His

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[31] A sound Hadīth narrated by Muslim, Aḥmad and Al Bayhaqi on the authority of 'Umar (ﷺ).

Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions listen to this lesson, and when they had understood it, He forgave them and permitted them, out of His mercy for them, to make use of the ransom they had taken. He (ﷻ) said:

﴾Now enjoy what you have won as lawful and good, and keep your duty to Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 69)

Aftermath of Badr

The Arabs were all amazed at the decisive victory which the Muslims had gained at Badr. In fact, the people of Makkah refused to believe the news when it first reached them, for they thought it to be the ravings of a madman. When it was proved true, however, a number of men collapsed and died on the spot while others were so confused they did not know what to do.

❑ Just as the people of Makkah rejected the news of their defeat until they were confronted with its shame, similarly the idolaters and Jews of Madīnah rejected the news of the victory which had reached their ears. Some of them even went to the extent of accusing the Muslims of fabricating the news of their victory, and they remained stubborn until they actually saw the captives being brought in chains, to their great disappointment.

❑ The attitudes of the various groups of unbelievers towards the Muslims differed after the victory which gave power to Islām and its followers, made their authority respected in and around Madīnah and extended their influence to the caravan routes in the north of the peninsula, where no-one could pass any-more without their permission. The people of Makkah withdrew within themselves, nursing their wounds, recuperating their strength and preparing to take revenge. They announced that, the day of vengeance was near, and the defeat which they had sustained only increased their hatred of Islām, resentment against Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions, and oppression of those who newly accepted his faith. Thus whoever felt inclined to Islām either had

to keep it secret or live despised and oppressed. This was in Makkah, where the state was based on unbelief. As for Madīnah, where the Muslims were the dominant majority, the enmity towards Islām took the form of intrigue, hypocrisy and deceit. Thus a number of idolaters and Jews professed Islām openly while their hearts were seething with malice and unbelief. At the head of them was 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy.

❑ Usāmah ibn Zayd narrated: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and his Companions used to excuse the idolaters and the People of the Book, as Allāh (ﷻ) had ordered them, and bore their insults patiently. Allāh (ﷻ) said:

﴾Many of the People of the Book long to make you disbelievers after your belief, from envy on their own account, after the truth has become manifest to them. Forgive and be indulgent [towards them] until Allāh gives a command.﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 109)

So the Prophet (ﷺ) used to follow the command of forgiveness and indulgence towards them until Allāh (ﷻ) gave the final decision concerning them.[32]

❑ When he fought the battle of Badr, where Allāh (ﷻ) caused many of the Quraish nobles to be killed and the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions to return home victorious with their captives, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy and the idolaters who were with him said to one another: "This is a matter which has taken its course, so let us swear allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) and accept Islām."

❑ Nevertheless, although one group of nonbelievers had resorted to deception, at the same time another group of Jews openly expressed their anger with Muhammad (ﷺ) and their grief at the defeat of the Quraish at Badr. In fact, Ka'b Al-Ashraf, one of the Jewish chieftains, even sent odes to the Quraish, bemoaning their losses and urging them to seek revenge. After this distasteful incident the hostility between

[32] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in his *Tafsīr* with a sound chain, Ibn Kathīr says.

the Muslims and the Jews increased. The Jews thereafter tried to belittle the importance of the victory achieved by Islām, thus paving the way for the violent events which were to follow soon after and which the Jews paid for with their blood, individually as well as collectively.

❑ As regards the bedouin and others who lived outside Madīnah and near the caravan routes, they were people who kept mainly to themselves. They had no thought for the problems of faith and disbelief. Their only concern was the acquisition of food from any source and they did not mind if they had to steal it. Their recent history concerning the caravans of pilgrims being looted is a true witness of the fact that they neither respect any sanctuary nor fear anything but strength. If it were not for the Saudis' use of force against them, the Ḥajj road would not have been safe. They had even robbed Madīnah of its bounties, and the pre-Islāmic *jahilīyah* which they inherited made their hearts side with the idolaters of the peninsula. They were astounded at the victory of the Muslims in Badr. Although they began to gather their forces with the intention of raiding Madīnah at the earliest opportunity, the Prophet (ﷺ) confronted them with his forces and routed them without much resistance.

The Beginning of the conflict Between the Jews and the Muslims

The Muslims had never contemplated breaking their treaty with the Jews nor did they ever think of driving them out of the Arabian peninsula. On the contrary, the Muslims expected help from them in their war against paganism and support for the ideology of monotheism. The Muslims hoped that the Jews would attest to the truthfulness of Muhammad (ﷺ) in his declaration of Allāh's faultlessness and absolute might and that their attachment to the previous Scripture and acquaintance with

the sayings of the Prophets would urge them to convince the unlettered Arabs that the divine messages were true and that belief in them was compulsory. These genuine feelings were in accordance with the spirit of the Qur'ānic āyāt (verses) which had been Revealed up to that time; hence the Qur'ān encouraged and emphasized such feelings.

﴾They who disbelieve say: "You are no messenger [of Allāh]." Say: Allāh and whoever has true knowledge of the Scripture, are sufficient witness between me and you.﴿ (Qur'ān 13: 43)

﴾Those whom We gave the Scripture rejoice in that which is revealed to you. And of the clans there are those who deny some of it. Say: "I am commanded only that I serve Allāh and ascribe to Him no partner. To Him I call and to Him is my return.﴿ (Qur'ān 13: 36)

❑ The Jews, however, lived up to the worst expectations. Not a few days had passed since their mixing with the Muslims in Madīnah before they started indulging in annoying the Muslims and inciting others against them. If they had disbelieved in Muhammad (ﷺ) as they had disbelieved in Jesus before, been convinced that anything besides their Torah was false, been content with offering their prayers in their synagogues, and restrained their tongues from slandering the Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ), the Muslims would have left them alone to disbelieve until the Final Hour without war conflict. However, as the Muslims were exerting themselves to their utmost to build their state whereas the Jews were doing their utmost to destroy it, as Islām was in conflict with idolatry whereas the Children of Israel were siding with their sentiment, tongues and propaganda against Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions, it was then a situation that could not be tolerated.

❑ During the Muslims' joy at their victory in Badr, those Jews were not ashamed to say to the Prophet (ﷺ): "Do not be deceived by the fact that you encountered a people who had no knowledge of warfare and thus you took advantage of them. By

God, if we had fought you, you would have known who were the real men." Revelation had to come down to warn these people of their evil end:

﴾Say [Muhammad] those who disbelieve: You will be overcome and gathered unto Hell, an evil resting-place. There was a token for you in two host which met; one army fighting in the way of Allāh, and another disbelieving, whom they saw as twice their number, clearly, with their very eyes. Thus Allāh strengthens with His help whom He will. Indeed! here is truly a lesson for those who have eyes.﴿
(Qur'ān 3: 12-13)

The second *āyāh* is a reminder of what happened at Badr.

❑ The first people to expose their malice and scoff of Islām and the Muslims were the Jews of the Banū Qaynuqā, who were residing within Madīnah itself. The Muslims suppressed their anger and waited to see what Jewish plots would be Revealed as the days went by. The Jews in fact strove toward their own ignominous end. It happened that an Arab woman went into the market of the Banū Qaynuqā with her jewellery and sat down in the goldsmith's shop. Soon a group of Jews gathered around her, demanding that she uncover her face. She refused. The goldsmith then, without her knowing, pinned the hem of her garment to her back. When she got up, she was exposed, and the Jews were laughing at her. The woman cried out and a man among the Muslims pounced upon the goldsmith and killed him. The Jews fell upon him in turn and killed him, and the spark ignited into a war between the Muslims and the Banū Qaynuqā. This was in the middle of *Shawwāl* in the second year of the Hijrah.

❑ The Jews took to their fortresses, fighting from there. The Prophet (ﷺ) surrounded them and kept a constant siege for fifteen nights until they were forced to surrender and accept whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) decided to do with them, their womenfolk and their children.

When Allāh (ﷻ) turned them over to the Muslims, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy came and said: "O Prophet (ﷺ), be kind to my clients."

(They were allies of the Khazraj). The Prophet (ﷺ) did not reply immediately and 'Abdullāh repeated his statement. The Prophet (ﷺ) then turned away from him but he held on to the Prophet's (ﷺ) armour.

The Prophet's (ﷺ) colour changed and he said: Let me go!" He became so angry that the onlookers saw darken his face. He repeated his demand.

But Abdullāh replied: "No, I shall not let you go till you show kindness to my clients. Four hundred without armour and three hundred with armour: They have protected me from all and sundry. Now you are going to slaughter them in one morning? I am a man who fears the consequences, by God."

❑ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) replied: "They are yours on condition that they leave Madīnah and do not settle near us."

❑ So they travelled to Adhra'at in Syria and it was not long before most of them perished there. Would it not have been better for them if they had respected the rights of neighbours, acknowledged the value of treaties, and remained in Madīnah in peace and contentment? They hastened the evil upon themselves by starting it.

❑ Regarding 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy's conversation with the Prophet (ﷺ), the following āyah (verse) was revealed:

﴾And you see those in whose hearts is a disease race towards them, saying: we fear lest a change of fortune befall us, and it may happen that Allāh will vouchsafe [you] the victory, or a commandment from His Presence. Then will they repent of their secret thoughts.﴿ (Qur'ān 5: 52)

❑ It would be a good thing for us to ponder over the behaviour of these Jews, the secret of their strong grudge against Islām and its Prophet (ﷺ), and their shameful alignment with paganism in its struggle against Islām. Is it true that the conflict between Judaism and Islām was political, not religious? And that sole power in the Arabian peninsula was the cause of this heated rivalry?

❑ Probing the depths of human feelings and emotions will explain many an obscure circumstance. We saw the Muslims in Makkah siding with the Christians in their struggle with Zoroastrianism and saddened at the defeat of Rome by Persia, even though Islām had not yet established such a strong contact with the Christians to warrant this feeling. However, it was the only natural feeling that could be expected of those who were sincere to their faith. The Muslims possessed a Scripture which invited to monotheism. The Christians, even though their understanding of monotheism was distorted and they had sullied the truth with superstition, were nevertheless possessors of a Scripture, and were considered of a higher level than the fire-worshippers. Thus the desire to see them victorious over clear-cut paganism was a form of sincerity to Islām itself. It is respect for the truth which is with you to draw close to whatever is near truth and withdraw from whatever is far from truth. The idolaters of Makkah were logical with themselves when they welcomed the victory of the Persians and counted it as a victory for paganism in all its forms over the divine religions as a whole.

❑ What then was the meaning of the monotheistic Jews (as they claim) feeling angry at the victory of Islām over idolatry? And how do we interpret their sympathy with the idolaters who were killed and their eager striving to make Arab paganism triumphant over the new faith? The only interpretation for this attitude is that the Jews had lost contact with the spirit of their faith. Their general behaviour had nothing to do with their heavenly heritage, and they had no regard for anything which was close to the ideal of monotheism or the laws of the Torah because that took second place after their all-powerful desires and clinging selfishness. For this reason the Qur'ān questions the value of the faith which they claim to possess:

﴾And when it is said to them: believe in that which Allāh has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us. And they disbelieve in that which comes after it, though it is the truth

confirming that which they possess. Say [them, Muhammad]: Why then did you kill the prophets of Allāh previously, if you are [indeed] believers? And Moses came to you with clear proofs [of Allāh's sovereignty], yet while he was away, you chose the calf [for worship and you were wrongdoers.》 (Qur'ān 2: 91-92)

❑ Apparently the groups of Jews who lived among the Arabs were bands of mercenaries who took religion as a cover for far-reaching economic aims. When they thought that these aims were threatened with extinction, the hidden disbelief reappeared, disbelief in Allāh (ﷻ) and all His prophets. They recognized no honourable means in their fight against Islām and they were not prevented by any limits or treaties in their plots against it. Thus there was no alternative but to expel them and purify the earth of their presence.

❑ The Muslims pursued all who broke their pledge, openly declared war on Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger(ﷺ), supported the Quraish and their views, and showed signs of sadness and sympathy for what befell them (Quraish). The Muslims pursued this band of Jewish leaders with death and terror. Among those upon whom the just sentence was passed was Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf. This man had travelled from Madīnah to Makkah to express his condolences to the idolaters who were defeated at Badr and were bent on taking revenge on Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions.

It is he whom Abū Sufyān asked: "I beseech you, by God, tell us, is our faith more beloved to God or the faith of Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions? Which of us is more guided and closer to the truth? We feed [our guests] fat camels and give them milk instead of water and we feed them as long as the wind blows."

❑ Ka'b (ﷺ) replied: "You are more guided to the path than they." Upon this Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following āyah:

《Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Scripture has been given, how they believe in idols and false deities, and how they

say of those [idolaters] who disbelieve: "These are more rightly guided than those who believe?﴿ (Qur'ān 4: 51)

❑ Ka'b (ﷺ) returned to Madīnah in open hostility and utmost boldness to the extent that he even composed odes about some of the Muslim women. This was beyond the limits of tolerance, so the Muslims spilled his blood. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent someone to bring him out of his fortress so that he might receive his just reward. Muhammad ibn Maslamah and Abū Na'ilah went to him after they had been given the Prophet's (ﷺ) permission to say about him whatever would convince the Jew that they had disavowed themselves of Islām.

Muhammad ibn Maslamah went to him and said: "That man has demanded charity of us and put us in distress. So I have come to you to take a loan."

❑ Ka'b (ﷺ) replied: "By God, you must have had enough of him."

❑ "We have become his followers and we do not wish to leave him until we see how his affair will turn out. However, we want you to give us a loan."

❑ All right. Give me a security."

❑ "What do you want?"

❑ "Pledge me your women as security."

❑ "How can we pledge you our women when you are the handsomest of the Arabs?"

❑ "Then pledge me your children."

"When the son of one of us grows up, it will be said he was pledged as security in return for a load or two of dates. Let us pledge you our arms."

❑ Abū Na'ilah acted similarly, and said to the Jew: "The advent of that man has proved a tribulation for us. The Arabs have opposed us and attacked us in unison. They have cut the way for us so that our children are lost and we ourselves are exhausted. Our children as well as ourselves are under severe pressure." The conversation continued along similar lines as with Ibn

Maslamah and Ka'b (ﷺ) finally agreed to give them a loan in return for their pledging of their arms. This is what they had wanted, for Ka'b (ﷺ) would not object to their carrying arms since it was what he had asked of them.

❑ Then one moonlit night they set off for his fortress to conclude the agreement. His wife, who heard the shout said: "I hear a voice which seems to be dripping blood."

Ka'b (ﷺ) replied: "If the young man was invited to a duel, he would respond."

❑ He descended in full adornment, with perfume wafting from him. The men soon engaged him in conversation while they were walking along.

❑ Then Abū Na'ilah pretended to want to smell the perfume on his hair, and passed his hand through it, saying: "I have never any perfume sweeter than tonight's." Ka'b (ﷺ) glowed with vanity at this.

Abū Na'ilah put his hand again into the Jew's hair and, grasping his temples, said to his companions: "Here he is, the enemy of Allāh (ﷻ)"

❑ They pounced upon him with their swords,[33] and stabbed his body with the arms which he had demanded as a pledge instead of the women and children. Ka'b (ﷺ) gave such a cry that there was not a house which did not light up to see what was the matter. When morning came, the Jews learnt of the death of their tyrant. Fear crept into their stubborn hearts and the vipers slithered into their holes to hide.

❑ The stick proved useful where advice and exhortation failed. The Jews kept to their limits and did not venture to tangle with the Muslims again. It seemed as though they would not again support an idolater against Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) after that day, and thus the Prophet (ﷺ) was able to dedicate his efforts to the confrontation with the bedouin idolaters for a time.

[33] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq with a weak chain. However, it is also narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh. Apparently the events written here are taken from two different narrations.

Skirmishes with the Quraish

The Muslims were not deluded by the victory which they had achieved nor did they cease to observe their enemies and prepare for them. They were absolutely certain that Makkah would not fail to seek revenge for itself and would not yield to the catastrophe which had befallen it. To safeguard the status of his people and show their strength, Abū Sufyān thought it wise to strike Madīnah in a swift attack and withdraw immediately, having regained some of the Quraish's reputation for themselves and causing some losses to the Muslims. Moreover, Abū Sufyān had sworn that his head would not touch water until he attacked Muhammad (ﷺ) and he had to fulfill his oath. He therefore led two hundred horsemen until they arrived under cover of night at the dwelling of the Banū al Naḍīr on the outskirts of Madīnah. He stayed with Salam ibn Mushkim, one of the Jewish leaders, and obtained information from him about the Muslims. Together they studied the best way of hurting them and escaping from their patrols. Abū Sufyān thought of a scheme which would satisfy his oath and achieve his aim. With his men he raided an area which was called Al 'Arid, burnt the fences of its date-palm groves, found one of the Anṣār and his ally in their plantation and killed them, and took off in the direction of Makkah.

❑ The Muslims heard about what had happened and they pursued Abū Sufyān and his men. As soon as the idolaters noticed the posse chasing them they quickened their pace. When Abū Sufyān felt they were in danger, he began shedding the provisions which they had brought with them until he was able to put a good distance between himself and the Muslims. On the way the Muslims came across these provisions, most of which were Sawīq (a mash made of sugar and dates) and so they called this skirmish the Sawīq Battle!

❑ The Quraish did not gain from this futile raid anything over which they could raise their heads so they thought that they should keep away from clashes with the Muslims until the most

suitable opportunity presented itself. But how could such a thing happen while their trade was passing to and from near Madīnah?

Safwān ibn Umayyah said to the Quraish: "Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions have spoiled our trade and we do not know what to do with his Companions as long as they remain by the coast. The people of the coast have made treaties with them and the majority have joined them, so we do not know which road to take. If we remain in homes, we shall eat up our capital and it will vanish. Our life in Makkah is dependent on trade with Syria in summer and with Abyssinia in winter."

❑ Al-Aswad ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib said in reply: "Avoid the coast road and take to Iraq." He introduced him to Furat ibn Huyyan of the tribe of the Banū Bakr ibn Wa'il who could be employed as their guide on that journey. Thus the caravan of the Quraish set off under the leadership of Safwān ibn Umayyah, taking the new route. However, Na'im ibn Mas'ūd came to Madīnah, bearing the news of this caravan and its planned course. He joined Salīt ibn al Nu'mān in a drinking spree before the prohibition of alcohol and confided its secret to him. Salīt hurried to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him the story. The Prophet (ﷺ) immediately dispatched Zayd ibn Hārithah at the head of a hundred horsemen to intercept the caravan. Zayd met it at a well called Al-Qirdah and captured the entire caravan, which was carrying large amounts of silver. The idolaters all fled in panic and only Furat ibn Hayyn fell into the hands of the Muslims. When he was taken to Madīnah he accepted Islām.

❑ The Quraish were dismayed by this new disaster and it increased their fervour for revenge. They made preparations for a confrontation with the Muslims in a complete mobilization of all their forces. This and other surrounding events led up to the Battle of Uḥud in the third year of the Hijrah.

❑ In the course of our discussion on Islām's military activity during its first two years at Madīnah, we cannot omit to mention some other important events which took place at that time.

❑ Khanīs ibn Ḥudhāfah al Sahmi, who was the husband of Ḥafṣah bint 'Umar (ﷺ), passed away. He was a good man and had taken part in Badr. When her waiting period was over, her father wanted to select a husband for her. 'Umar (ﷺ) explained what took place.

"I met 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (ﷺ) and proposed marriage with Ḥafṣah. I said: If you wish I shall marry you to Ḥafṣah bint 'Umar (ﷺ)."

He replied. "I shall think about."

A few days passed then I met him again and asked him about the matter. He replied: "It occurred to me not to marry."

Then I met Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and said to him: "If you wish I shall marry you to Ḥafṣah bint 'Umar (ﷺ)."

He kept silent and did not give me any answer at all. I was more angry with him than with 'Uthmān (ﷺ). I waited a few days, then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked me for her hand in marriage and I married her to him.

Later I met Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and he said: "Perhaps you were angry with me when you offered Ḥafaṣh to me in marriage and I did not respond?" I said yes. He replied: "The only thing which prevented me from replying to you was that I knew the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had mentioned her (that is, in connection with marriage) and I was not going to disclose the secret of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). However, If he had not chosen her I should have accepted her."[34]

❑ It is clear from the Prophet's (ﷺ) decision to marry 'Umar's (ﷺ) daughter after Abū Bakr's (ﷺ), then to marry his daughter Fāṭimah to 'Alī (ﷺ), and Umm Kulthūm to 'Uthmān (ﷺ) after the death of Ruqayyah that he was eager to strengthen his ties with these four men, whose sufferings and sacrifices for Islām were well-known during the crises which Islām underwent and

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[34] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Al-Nasā'ī and Aḥmad on the authority of 'Umar (ﷺ).

from which it emerged safely.

❑ In the second year of the Hijrah the fast of Ramaḍān was made compulsory as well as the *zakāt-al fitr*, and minimum rate of other types of *zakāh* was explained. The *qibla* was changed from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah on account of what took place during this year, and this change aroused the anger and strong objections of the Jews. Prior to it they were hoping that the Prophet (ﷺ) would follow them, and perhaps the basis of their treaty with him was their hope of using him and exploiting his supporters. However, when Islām distinguished itself clearly with its new *qibla* their hearts were filled with frustration, and this led them to intensify the attack on Islām and hatch plots against it. The propaganda warfare which they launched against Islām after the changing of the *qibla* was frustrated by the Qur'ān:

﴾The foolish of the people will say: what has turned them from the *qiblah* which they formerly observed? Say: to Allāh belong the East and the West. He guides whom He will a straight path.﴿
(Qur'ān 2: 142)

﴾It is no righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West, but righteousness is he who believes in Allāh and the Last Day.."﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 177)

﴾To Allāh belong the East and the West, and whichever way you turn, there is Allāh's Countenance.﴿ (Qur'ān 7: 115)

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) is the Lord of all times and places and His (ﷻ) directing of a nation to a specific *qibla* does not mean that He is limited in space or defective in His divinity. The turning of the Muslims to the Ka'bah was a return to the original, which was built by the father of the prophets, Ibrahīm (Abraham) (ﷺ). In returning to the original there is avoidance of the deviations which took place in later times at the hands of the erring progeny, especially the Children of Israel.

The Battle of Uḥud

Ever since their defeat at Badr, the Quraish could not find any peace of mind and the subsequent events only helped to intensify their enmity. Thus by the time a year had elapsed the Quraish had completed their preparations, their allies had gathered around them, and everyone who had a grudge against Islām and the Muslims had joined them. The revengeful army of more than three thousand then set out to Madīnah. Its leader, Abū Sufyān, saw fit to bring their women with them so that they might urge the men to fight valiantly to protect their honour. The old enmity and the suppressed anger kindled the hatred in their hearts and reflected the bitterness of the fight that was about to ensure. In the early days of *Shawwāl* in the third year, the marching army reached Madīnah, camped near the mountain of Uḥud, and let their horses loose to graze in its fields which extended all around.

❑ The Muslims gathered around the Prophet (ﷺ), thinking about their affair. Should they go out into the open to fight the enemy, or allow them to reach the streets of Madīnah and fight them there while the women fought from the rooftops? The Prophet (ﷺ) was inclined to the latter opinion, and in this he was supported by men known for their farsightedness. 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy himself favoured this opinion. However, the men who had not witnessed Badr were eager to go out.

They said: "We were longing for this day and we supplicated to Allāh (ﷻ). Now He has realized it for us and the time for the march has arrived." The majority of them were youths who desired martydom and it appeared that most of the Muslims were in favour of going out to meet the enemy. Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) entered his house and came out wearing his armour in readiness for battle. The people then began to feel that they had forced the Prophet (ﷺ) to accept their opinion and they showed their desire to give way to his opinion.

The Prophet (ﷺ), however, had taken no offence at the difference of opinion and said: "It is not fitting for a prophet

who has put on his armour to take it off until Allāh (ﷻ) decides between him and his enemy.[35]

"It is I who invited you to this discussion and you have insisted on going out. So be fearful of Allāh (ﷻ) and patient at misfortune. And look at what Allāh (ﷻ) has commanded you and do it."[36]

Then, leading a thousand men, he proceeded until he reached Uḥud.

❑ Along the way, however, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy turned back with one-third of the men, dissatisfied because the Prophet (ﷺ) had rejected his idea and accepted that of others:

"I don't know why we should ill ourselves!" 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥarām, father of Jābir, followed them, advising them to stay in their positions and scolding them for turning back. He reminded them of their duty to defend Madīnah against the attackers, even if they had no faith in Allāh (ﷻ) and the Last Day nor confidence in Islām and the Prophet (ﷺ). Nevertheless, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy refused to listen to him, and the following āyah was revealed concerning him and the others who deserted with him.

﴾And that He might know the hypocrites, to whom it was said: Come, fight in the way of Allah, or defend yourselves. They answered: If we knew anything about fighting, we should follow you. On that day they were nearer disbelief than faith.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 167)

❑ The Muslims camped in the valley near Uḥud, with their backs to the mountain. The Prophet (ﷺ) drew up the plan to win the battle and it was a masterly one. He set the archers in their places and put 'Abdullāh ibn Jubayr in charge of them.

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[35] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq on the authority of Al Zuhrī as *mursal*, and Aḥmad on the authority of Abū Zubayr from Jābir, and his chain is according to the stipulation of Muslim except that Zubayr is known for *tadlīs*. It has support, however, in the Ḥadīth of Ibn Abbās narrated by Al Bayhaqi, as stated in *Al-Bidāyah*, with a good chain. The Ḥadīth is therefore sound and is narrated also by Aḥmad and Al-Ḥākim. It is a long Ḥadīth on the Battle of Uḥud and some quotations from it will appear in this book.

[36] Mentioned by Ibn Kathīr as a narration from Mursi ibn 'Aqabah as Mu'addal.

They were fifty men and he advised them thus; Keep the cavalry away from us with your arrows and do not let them approach us from the rear. Whether the tide is with or against us, stay in your places. We should not be caught from your direction.[37]

In another narration he said: "Protect our rear. If you see us being killed do not come to our assistance, and if you see us winning do not join us."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) was confident that with these strict orders the rear of his army would be protected by the group of archers. So he proceeded to arrange the vanguard, giving the order that fighting should not begin without his permission. He himself was clad in a coat of mail,[38] and he began selecting the men of courage and strength to be in the vanguard of believers when the two armies clashed. The number of Muslims was a quarter of that of the idolaters, and nothing could compensate for this inequality except the men who number a few but outweigh thousands.

❑ Thābit[39] narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ), on the day of Uḥud, held out a sword and said: "Who shall take this sword and do justice to it?"

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[37] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. However, it has much supporting evidence, e.g. the Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd and Aḥmad on the authority of Al-Barra ibn Azid, and the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās, which is the second narration quoted in this book, and it was narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Ḥakim, who verified its authenticity as mentioned above.

[38] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Al-Ḥākim and Al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Al Zubayr ibn al 'Awwam. Al-Ḥākim verified its authenticity (*saḥiḥ*) and Al Dhahabī agreed with him. In my opinion it is good (*ḥasan*). Al Tirmidhī also narrated it but found it to be strange (*gharīb*). However, it has much supporting evidence (See *Al-Majma'*).

[39] Thus it is stated in Ibn Kathīr's History and attributed to Aḥmad, and the author transmitted it in exactly the same way. In fact, it is on the authority of Thābit from Anas (ﷺ) This is the way Aḥmad as well as Muslim transmitted it.

❑ Everyone held back except Abū Dujānah, who said: "I shall take it and do justice to it." He took it and split the heads of the idolaters with it. Ibn Isḥāq narrated:

Abū Dujānah was a brave man who used to put on a conceited air in battle. He had a red band which he would tie around his head and this indicated that he would fight to the death.

❑ When he took the sword from the Prophet (ﷺ), he tied the band around his head and went out saying: "It is who have pledged to my friend while we were in the plain near the date palms that I shall never remain in the rear any more, but I'll strike with the sword of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ)."

❑ The two armies joined battle and the Prophet (ﷺ) gave permission for his men to fight the enemy. The first stages of battle began by showing wonders, as if 3,000 idolaters were facing 30,000 Muslims, not a few hundred only. The Muslims appeared to be at their peak of bravery and confidence.

❑ Ḥanzalah ibn Abī 'Āmir left his house after hearing the call to arms. He had just got married, and leaving the embrace of his wife, he hurried to the battlefield so as not to miss the *jihād*. The call for sacrifice was more overpowering in his soul than the call for pleasure. The hero was martyred while yet in a state of impurity (*janabah*). The spirit of pure faith prevailed within the ranks and they swept through the army of idolatry as a flood sweeps through, demolishing the dams. Ṭalḥah ibn Abī Ṭalḥah stood holding the banner of the Quraish, challenging the Muslims to a duel. Al-Zubayr ibn-al 'Awwam responded by jumping onto his camel and, pulling him onto the ground, he finished him off with his sword.

❑ Abū Dujānah advanced fearlessly with his red band around his head, killing any idolater whom he came across. One of the idolaters had busied himself with finishing off the wounded Muslims on the field, and, as Ka'b ibn Mālik (ﷺ) reported:

"A man from the Muslims, who was wearing a helmet, lay in wait for him. I advanced until I was just behind him. Then I

began to assess the Muslim and the unbeliever who was eyeing him, and I found the unbeliever to be better equipped. I waited until they clashed and I saw the Muslim strike unbeliever on his shoulder with his sword. It penetrated to his hip, splitting him in two! Then the Muslim uncovered his face and said: 'What do you think, Ka'b (ﷺ) I am Abū Dujānah."

❑ Ḥamzah ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib fought like an enraged tiger. He attacked the standard-bearers of the Banū 'Abd Addār, killing them one after the other. Waḥshi, the slave of Jubayr ibn Mut'im said:

"Jubayr said to me: "If you kill Ḥamzah, Muhammad's (ﷺ) uncle, you are free."

So I went with the army. I was an Abyssinian man who threw javelins as well as any Abyssinian, and I seldom missed my target. When the battle began, I went out looking for Ḥamzah. When I spied him he was like a runaway camel, wreaking havoc among the people with his sword. Nothing could stop him. By Allāh (ﷻ), I prepared myself for him, hiding behind every tree or rock so that he might come close.

Then Sibā' ibn 'Abdul 'Uzzā came in front of me, and when Ḥamzah saw him he called: "Come to me, you son of a wretch!" He struck him in such a way that it seemed as if his head was wrenched off. I steadied my javelin, and when I was satisfied I threw it at him. It pierced his stomach and went through his back. He came towards me but collapsed on the way. I left him until he died. Then I came back, removed my javelin and returned to the camp, where I sat down since I had no other need and had killed him only to be free."

❑ Despite the great loss which struck the Muslims at the death of Ḥamzah, their small army continued to control the situation. The banner of the Muslims was carried by Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, the illustrious da'iyah. When he was martyred, his place was taken by 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. The *Muhajirīn* vied with the Anṣār for the place of honour in this battle and the Islāmic banner advanced step by step. Their battle cry was "Amut, amut" (Let me die, let me die.)!

❑ The women of the Quraish were doing their utmost to encourage their men. They beat drums and urged the men into battle. They were led by Hind bint 'Utbah, wife of Abū Sufyān, who recited couplets of poetry inciting the Banū 'Abd al Dar to keep the standard of Makkah high: "Stay with it, *Banu al Dar*, stay with it, O protectors of the rear! Strike with every sharp sword." Urging the men on, she recited: "If you advance we shall embrace and spread rugs. But retreat and we shall separate not as lovers separate." The Quraish exerted their utmost strength to crush the vigour of the Muslims. However, they were disappointed, and they felt frustrated at their steadfastness and bravery. Ibn Is-ḥāq said:

Then Allāh (ﷻ) sent down His help, and fulfilled His promise. They swept upon them with their swords until then flushed them out of their encampment. There was no doubt that the enemy would be defeated.

'Abdullāh ibn Al Zubayr narrated from his father:

"By Allāh (ﷻ), I found myself looking at the legs of Hind bint 'Utbah and her female companions who had lifted up their skirts to flee. There was nothing capturing them."

❑ One may be at a party where the whole place is hit up, when, suddenly, there is a power cut and the lights go out, plunging the place into gloomy darkness. It was this kind of hateful change which turned the tide of the battle at Uḥud. A fleeting moment of human weakness possessed a section of the army and spread confusion in the ranks of the entire army. In a second of thoughtlessness were lost all the gains which had been made by rare courage and great sacrifice.

❑ You have seen how the Prophet (ﷺ) issued strict orders to the archers to stay in their places to protect the rear, and how he ordered them not to move at all even if they saw the army being defeated. However, a fleeting passion of worldly love scattered these orders to the wind. No sooner did the archers see the Quraish in retreat and their booty strewn about the valley than they left their stations and descended into the field to collect their share of the wealth!

❑ Before this, the enemy cavalry, under the leadership of Khālid ibn al Walīd, were kept in confined. They could find no breach to penetrate the midst of the Muslims. However, when Khālid saw that the rear of the Muslims was now exposed, he quickly seized the opportunity, led his men around the mountain and swept down upon his surprised enemy. The fleeing idolaters saw the effects of this sudden change and they turned around. A woman named 'Amrah bint Al-Qamah raised the standard of the Quraish from the ground and the idolaters rallied round her. Thus the *Ṣaḥabah* were caught in the van and the rear as if they were again caught between the mortar and pestle.

❑ Free men, however, are not vanquished easily. They were confused at what happened, no doubt, but they began to fight with vigour, even though their aim this time was only to save themselves and find a way out of this tight squeeze. Many were martyred in their attempt to escape and the idolaters managed to come close to the Prophet (ﷺ). One of them pelted him with a stone which broke his nose and front teeth and gashed his face.[40] He fell to the ground, bleeding. The news spread that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed and the Muslims dispersed. Some of them entered Madīnah while others climbed on top of the mountain. The *Ṣaḥabah* were bewildered as to what to do.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) began shouting to the believers: "Come to me, servants of Allāh (ﷻ)! About thirty men gathered around him. However the idolaters saw them and attacked them. Ṭalḥa was hit in his arm with an arrow which paralyzed it.

❑ Ubayy ibn Khalaf, who had sworn to kill the Prophet (ﷺ) approached him and, thinking that this was the time, said: "Liar! Where will you run?"

❑ He pounced upon the Prophet (ﷺ) with his sword, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I am the one to kill him," and stabbed him through his chest armour. This made him fall and moan like a

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[40] Narrated by Ibn Jarīr in his History on the authority of Al Suddī as *mursal*, as in Al-Bidāyah, the breaking of his teeth and gashing of his head are confirmed in Muslim on the authority of Anas (رضي الله عنه). Also Bukhārī narrated it as *muṭlaq*.

bull. A day or two later he died.[41]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) continued calling the Muslims to him and he was able to climb the mountain with the few men who were with him. Those who had sought shelter on the mountain then rejoined him and he was greatly pleased to find the reminder of his men with whom he could put up some resistance. They in turn were relieved to find that he was alive and so they regained their composure.

❑ Apparently the rumour of the Prophet's (ﷺ) death had spread on many lips: Anas ibn al Nasr passed by a group of Muslims who had given up all hope. He asked them: "What are you waiting for?"

❑ "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has been killed,"

They replied. "What will you do with your lives after him?" he asked.

❑ "Get up and die for the cause he died for."

He then faced the idolaters and fought till he was killed.

❑ The Quraish for their part did not tire of attacking the Prophet (ﷺ) and the *Ṣaḥabah* who had rallied with him, intent on finishing them all off. One of the most crucial and trying hours in the history of this world passed as the idolatrous cavalry and archers waged attack after attack to achieve their goal. A great number of men fell before the eyes of the Prophet (ﷺ) as they were defending him. Ṭalḥah resisted them until he could go on no more; then he fell, halfway between life and death. Abū Dujānah shielded him with his back, and as the arrows penetrated him he did not flinch.

❑ Muslim narrated that on the day of Uḥud the Prophet (ﷺ) was left alone with seven of the Anṣār and two of the *Muhajirīn*, and when the idolaters attacked him he said: "Who

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[41] It is part of the above-mentioned Ḥadīth of the Suddī. Ibn Kathīr says: "It is very strange (*gharīb*) and in it is an unknown entity.

However, the part his killing of Ubayy is supported by the narration of Abul Aswad on the authority of 'Urwah ibn al Zubayr, and by the narration of Al Zuhrī on the authority of Sa'd ibn al Musayyib, as in *Al Bidayah*. Both of them are *mursal*.

will ward them off me in return for paradise?" One of the Anṣār advanced and fought till he died. Then they attacked him again until he said the same as before, and this continued until all seven of them were killed. Then he said: "Our Companions were not just to us," referring to those who had fled and deserted them. This defiance had its effect: Quraish eagerness to kill the Prophet (ﷺ) waned and his Companions returned to his side from all directions and recovered their zeal. The Prophet (ﷺ) then ordered his men to flush the Quraish from the peak which they had occupied on the mountain, saying, "They should not be higher than we are." They therefore pelted them with stones until they all evacuated the peak.[42]

❑ Extricating themselves from the consequences of this terrible disorder was no less momentous than the earlier victory. The Prophet (ﷺ) directed his full energies towards resisting the Quraish in his determination not to let them carry away any easy gain, and in fact to inflict on them such losses as would deter them from harassing the Muslims.

He drew the arrows from his quiver one by one, and handing them to Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqas, he said: "Shoot. My father and mother be your ransom.[43] Abū Ṭalḥan al-Anṣārī was an expert archer, and he fought to protect the Prophet (ﷺ). Every-time he shot an arrow the Prophet (ﷺ) raised his head to see where it fell, and Abū Ṭalḥa would inflate his chest, saying: "You are as my father and mother. No arrow shall hit you. I shall give my neck in protection of yours. And he would say: "My father is strong, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), so tell me what you need and order me to do whatever you will."

❑ The archers around the Prophet (ﷺ) succeeded in repelling the idolaters who were trying to climb the mountain, and thus they enabled the scattered Muslims to rejoin the Prophet (ﷺ).

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[42] This is part of the above-mentioned Ḥadīth of Al Suddī.

[43] Narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Anas (ﷺ). The same is Aḥmad's narration, but in another version he has "I am strong" instead of "my father is strong."

Nevertheless, they came as if they had been blinded. Some of them, from excessive anger and perplexity fought anyone in front of them, not knowing who they were fighting. One of them fought Al-Yamān, father of the famous *Ṣaḥabī,* Ḥudhayfah. The latter shouted "my father, my father" but to no avail. By the time scattered remnants of the Muslims reassembled exhaustion had completely overtaken them. However, Allāh (ﷻ) instilled tranquillity into their hearts and restored their optimism and confidence to them. They rested near the Prophet (ﷺ), awaiting anything new. Although drowsiness overtook some of them, as soon as the swords fell from their hands they awoke and were ready again for battle. This was because of Allāh's bounty to them:

﴾Then, after grief, He sent down security for you. As slumber overcame a party of you.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 154)

❑ The Quraish suffered no less than the Muslims from the horrors of that dreadful day. They were already exhausted in the first round, and when it was their turn and they hoped to make it a decisive battle, they found the Muslims too resilient. The obstacles in the way of exterminating them were too many for the Quraish to overcome. Thus they contented themselves with whatever gain they had made and decided to return to Makkah. At first the Muslims thought that they had retreated to attack Madīnah itself.

So the Prophet (ﷺ) said to 'Alī (ؓ): "Go after them and see what they are doing. If they leave the horses aside and ride the camels, then they are heading for Makkah. However, if they ride the horses and drive the camels, then their direction is Madīnah. By Him in Whose hands is my life, if they head for Madīnah I shall march upon them and fight them within its walls."

❑ 'Alī (ؓ) narrated: "So I went after them and saw that they had left the horses aside and were riding the camels in the direction of Makkah.[44]

[44] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain.

Ibn Is-hāq said:

"When Abū Sufyān was about to depart he approached to the mountain and shouted at the top of his voice. "I have been rewarded. War alternates. A day for the day of Badr. Exalted be Hubal!"

The Prophet (ﷺ) told 'Umar (ﷺ) to answer him. "Say: 'Allāh (ﷻ) is more exalted and sublime: your dead are in the Fire!"

❑ Abū Sufyān then said: "Come down to me, 'Umar (ﷺ).
The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Go to him and see what he wants."

❑ He went and Abū Sufyān said to him: "I beseech you by God, 'Umar (ﷺ), tell me, have we killed Muhammad (ﷺ)?"

❑ 'Umar (ﷺ) replied: "By Allāh (ﷻ), no. He can hear what you say at this moment."

❑ Abū Sufyān said: "You are more truthful to me than Ibn Qamī'ah, who claimed that he killed Muhammad (ﷺ)." Then he shouted:

"There has been some mutilation of your dead. By Allāh (ﷻ), I was neither pleased nor angry, and I neither forbade nor ordered it.[45] When Abū Sufyān turned to go away, he shouted: "Your rendez-vous is Badr next year."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) told one of his men to reply: "Yes, it is date between you and us."[46]

Lessons from the Test

The Battle of Uḥud is replete with strong morals and valuable lessons. Long āyāt were revealed in connection with its events and consequences, and it left a lasting impression on the mind of the Prophet (ﷺ), who continued to remember it up to a short while before his death. It was a hard test which purified the hearts and tore the veil from their secret thoughts. Hypocrisy became distinguishable from faith, and in fact, the levels of faith itself became known. Those who cared nothing for the worldly life stood from those who had some leanings toward it and whose

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[45] *Ṣaḥiḥ*: narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Ḥākim.

[46] I have not found this Ḥadīth with any others apart from Ibn Isḥāq.

lowly desires were like the sparks which lead to conflagrations.

❑ The battle began with the desertion by Ibn Ubayy, an action which contained spite for the future of Islām and treachery against it in the worst circumstances. These are the basest features of hypocrisy. Movements, during their spread and victory, attract many people into their fold, and thus the sincere mix with the insincere and the genuine with the false. This sort of mixing causes great harm to the progress and productivity of the major movements. It is of primary importance for them, therefore, when they are struck by severe crises which cleanse them of the bad elements. Allāh's wisdom dictated that such a purification should occur at Uḥud:

﴾It is not [the purpose] of Allāh to leave you in your present state till he separates the wicked from the good. And it is not [the purpose] of Allāh to let you know the Unseen.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 179)

❑ Cowardice and retreat were the behaviour which exposed the true nature of the hypocrites and humiliated them to their own faces and in front of the people even before heaven announced their hypocrisy. If you pass over the surface upon which these hypocrites creep and turn your attention to the lofty peaks of pure, deep-rooted faith, you will see it represented in the phase of successful attack when the fighting began, then in the phase of noble, exhausted defence, whose burden the Muslims bore after the tide had turned in favour of the idolaters. The men who write history with their blood and fix its direction with their determination were the ones to fight this war and, by doing so, to safeguard the future of Islām on earth.

❑ It is narrated that Khaythamah, whose son was killed at Badr, came to the Prophet (ﷺ), saying:

❑ I missed the Battle of Badr even though I was keen to be there, by Allāh (ﷻ). I drew lots with my son to see who should go. He was the lucky one, and he was granted martyrdom. Last night I saw him in a dream in happiest state, roaming freely among the fruit trees and rivers of paradise. He was saying: "Follow us, you shall join us in paradise. I have indeed found

my Lord's promise to be true."

❑ O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I have become eager to join him. I am advanced in years, my bones are weak and I should love to meet my Lord. So pray to Allāh (ﷻ), Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), that He may grant me martyrdom and closeness to my son in Paradise.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for him and he was martyred in the Battle of Uḥud.[47]

❑ 'Amr ibn al Jamūh was lame and disable, and he had four youthful sons who would go with the Prophet (ﷺ) on his battles. When preparations were being made for Uḥud, he wanted to go, but his sons said to him: "Allāh (ﷻ) has given you a concession, so stay at home and we shall go in your place. Allāh (ﷻ) has not made *jihād* compulsory for you.

'Amr (رضي الله عنه) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "These sons of mine are preventing me from doing *jihād* with you. Nevertheless, I hope to attain martyrdom and walk in paradise despite this disability of mine."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "In your case Allāh (ﷻ) has not made *jihād* compulsory." Then he turned to the sons and said: "What if you allow him? Maybe Allāh (ﷻ) will grant him martyrdom."

They did, and he went with the Prophet (ﷺ) and was martyred on the day of Uḥud.[48]

❑ Na'im ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه)[49] said and this was before the outbreak of the war:

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[47] I have not encountered this Ḥadīth.

[48] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq, who said: "It was told to me by Abū Isḥāq ibn Yasar, who narrated from some elders from the Banū Salmah."

This chain is good (*ḥasan*) if the elders are *Ṣaḥabah*, otherwise it is *mursal*. Part of it is in the Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of Abū Qatādah with the addition: "They were all killed at Uḥud: he, his brother's son and a slave of theirs. The Prophet (ﷺ) passed by his dead body and said: 'It is as though I am seeing you walking with your leg healed in paradise.

[49] The correct name is Nu'mān ibn Mālik. This Ḥadīth is *mursal*.

"Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ), do not deprive us of paradise, for by Him in Whose hands is my life, I shall definitely enter it."
Then Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "On what account?"

"On account of my love for Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and my not deserting the battlefield."
"You have spoken the truth,"
replied the Prophet (ﷺ), and he was martyred on that day.

❑ On that occasion 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh said:

O Allāh (ﷻ), I swear by you that I shall meet the enemy and they will kill me, cut open my stomach and cut off my nose and ears. Then you will ask me, "Why was that done to you? And I shall reply, "On account of my love for you.[50]

❑ These are some examples of the towering strength with which unbelief clashed at the beginning and at the end of the battle. Unbelief was shocked by the encounter and the earth shook beneath its feet. It gained nothing at the beginning of the battle and it was not able to benefit from what it gained at the end. This sort of heroism is buried under the walls of Islāmic history up to this day, and Islām will not have a strong force established for it nor will tyranny be removed from its back except by means of these stored-up powers in the hearts of the sincere people and the martyrs.

❑ Who was the secret of this inspiration? Who caused this enlightenment to burst forth? Who unleashed such powers? Muhammad (ﷺ). It was he who nurtured that unique generation. From his huge heart their hearts were filled with dedication to Allāh (ﷻ) and preference for what He had in store for them. This magnificent Prophet (ﷺ) was injured at Uḥud. The spikes of his helmet stuck in his face and Abū Ubādah

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[50] Narrated by Al-Ḥākim on the authority of Sa'id ibn al Musayyab, who said: "Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh said." Al-Ḥākim said: "It would be sound according to the stipulations of Bukhārī and Muslim if it were not for its being *mursal*." Abū-Dhahabī agreed with him on this, but I say it has other supporting ḥadiths with full chains. In one of them there is the addition: "Sa'd said: 'I saw him at the end of the day and his nose and ears were hanging from a thread."

leaned over him and pulled them out with his teeth. However, no sooner had they been removed than his front teeth fell out and blood flowed copiously from his wound. Every time water was poured on it, it bled more, and it did not stop until a piece of mat was burnt and applied to the wound.[51] A tooth was broken and also his helmet was broken over his head yet he remained sharp-witted, directing his Companions to the best positions until the battle ended. Then he suffered the loss of his uncle, Ḥamzah, who was killed by a javelin thrown into his stomach and whose liver was pulled out by Hind, the wife of Abū Sufyān, she tasted it and spat it out because of its bitterness.

The Prophet (ﷺ) had loved and respected Ḥamzah greatly, so when he saw what had been done to his body he felt very hurt and said: "I shall never have anyone like you again. I have never felt more angry than now.[52] However, submission to Allāh's will soon overcame his grief and he resumed his normal role of checking his Companions, comforting them, and filling their hearts with faith in Allāh (ﷻ) and acceptance of His decree.[53]
Imam Aḥmad narrated:[54]

"On the day of Uḥud when the idolaters were repelled, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "Arrange yourselves in rows so that I can praise my Lord, glory be to Him."
They then arranged themselves behind him in rows and he prayed:
❑ O Allāh (ﷻ), to You belongs all praise. O Allāh (ﷻ), there is no one to take hold of what You let loose and no-one to let loose what You take hold of; no guide for those whom You send astray

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[51] A sound Ḥadīth by Bukhārī, Muslim and others on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd.
[52] From the above-mentioned Ḥadīth of Sahl ibn Sa'd.
[53] Not authentic. Ibn Hishām mentions it without a chain and I have not found it anywhere else.
[54] In the *Musnad* of Aḥmad and Al-Ḥākim as well. The latter said it was sound according to the stipulations of Bukhārī and Muslim. But I say it is sound only because the chain contains 'Ubayd ibn Rifa'ah, from whom Bukhārī and Muslim did not narrate.

and no-one to lead astray whom You guide; no-one to give what You withhold and no withholder of what You give; no-one to bring close what You have sent afar, and no-one to send afar what You bring near. O Allāh (ﷻ), bestow upon us Your blessings, mercy, bounty and provision.

❑ O Allāh (ﷻ), verily I ask of You the everlasting bliss, which never grow stale nor vanishes. O Allāh (ﷻ), I seek Your aid on the day of poverty, and Your security on the day of fear. O Allāh (ﷻ), I seek refuge in You from the evil of what You have bestowed on us and what You have not bestowed. O Allāh (ﷻ), make faith beloved to us and make it beautiful in our hearts, and make unbelief hateful to us, as well as sin and disobedience, and make us of the upright. O Allāh (ﷻ), make us die as Muslims and resurrect us as Muslims, and admit us among the righteous, neither disgraced nor beguiled. O Allāh (ﷻ), fight the unbelievers who deceive Your messengers and deter others from Your way, and send upon them punishment and chastisement. O Allāh (ﷻ), fight the unbelievers who have been given the Scripture, O God of truth."

❑ The Qur'ān was gentle when it commented on the misfortune that befell the Muslims, in contrast to its comments after Badr, and little wonder, since calling the victors to account for their wrongs is usually harsher than calling the vanquished to account. In the first case Allāh (ﷻ) said:

﴿You desire the lure of this world and Allāh desires [for you] the Hereafter, and Allāh is Mighty, Wise. Had it not been for an ordinance of Allāh which had gone before, a fearful doom would have come upon you on account of what you took.﴾
(Qur'ān 8: 67-68)

However, after Uḥud He (ﷻ) said:

﴿Some of you desired the world, and some of you desired the Hereafter. Therefore He made you flee from them, that He might try you. Yet now He has forgiven you. Allāh is Lord of kindness to believers.﴾ (Qur'ān 3: 152)

❑ It was enough for those who had committed a mistake to taste the bitterness of defeat, and a quick reference to that contains a sufficient lesson to remind them of the consequences they had brought upon themselves. These āyāt mixed gentle scolding with useful lessons and purification of the believers so that their defeat in the field might not turn into despair or frustration which would paralyse them.

﴾**Systems have passed away before you. Do but travel in the land and see the nature of the consequences for those who denied [the messengers]. This is a declaration for mankind, a guidance and an admonition to those who ward off [evil]. Neither faint nor grieve, for you will overcome them if you are [indeed] believers.**﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 137-139)

❑ Then the Revelation proceeded to inform the Muslims of what they did not know regarding the laws of faith and life, or it reminded them of these things, which they had forgotten. It explained that believers, no matter how strong their relationship with Allāh (ﷻ), should not be deluded by it, or think that the world has yielded to them, or that its stable laws are like putty in their hands. Not at all, for extreme caution and unceasing work are the Muslims' equipment which will enable them to reach their outlined goals. The day they think that time is on their side, that nothing will go against them, and that they will gain the glories of this world and the Hereafter without paying the highest price, they will have trodden the path of utter failure.

﴾**If you have received a blow, the [disbelieving] people have received a similar blow. These are [only] the vicissitudes which We cause to follow one another for mankind.**﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 140)

﴾**Or did you think that you would enter paradise without Allāh knowing which of you really strive, or knowing those [of you] who are steadfast?**﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 142)

❑ People of feeling are ashamed to demand an expensive product at a low price, whereas they display readiness to

sacrifice themselves to achieve their aims. However, the readiness exhibited in peacetime should not fade during the time of fear. Human beings, in peacetime, imagine things to be simple and easy, and this may lead them to random action and deception. However, believers must be wary of such a situation. Let them listen to Allāh's reproaching of one who wishes death, and then avoids it as it comes near:

﴾And indeed you used to wish for death before you met in [in the field]. Now you have seen it with your own eyes!﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 143)

❑ Then Allāh (ﷻ) scolded those who lost their determination and zeal upon hearing the rumours of the Prophet's (ﷺ) death. This is not the behaviour of people of faith: they are followers of principles, not followers of personalities. If perchance the Prophet (ﷺ) died while defending the religion of Allāh (ﷻ), then it is expected of his Companions to stand firm in the jaws of death and meet the same fate as their leader did, not to waver and turn on their heels.

❑ The work of Muhammad (ﷺ) was to illuminate those dark corners of human thought and conscience. Thus, if he completes his role and leaves, is it right for those who had been enlightened to return to their former state of darkness? Muhammad (ﷺ) gathered the people around him as a servant and Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and those who joined him recognized him as their leader towards the truth and their link with Allāh (ﷻ). When he dies, their greater link with the One Who is living and never dies will remain and grow firmer.

﴾Muhammad is but a Messenger, Messengers [the like of whom] have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn on your heels? He who turns back does no harm to Allāh, and Allāh will reward the thankful.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 144)

❑ The noble āyāt continued in its enlightenment of the believers of the lessons from the incident, teaching them how in future they could avoid such predicaments and seizing the opportunity

to separate from the body of Muslims those who entered on the basis of hypocrisy. If the Battle of Badr caused the alienation of the unbelievers, then the Battle of Uḥud similarly exposed the hypocrites. Many a harmful thing may be beneficial, and one's body can be cured by sickness.

❑ Perhaps as a result of the disobedience to the orders in this battle, the Muslims learnt a sound lesson on the value of obedience. Thus the group which is not ruled by one command or which is plagued by individualist tendencies can never be successful in an encounter, and, in fact, can never vindicate itself in war or peace. All nations, whether believers or non-believers, are aware of this reality, and for this reason the army is based on absolute obedience. Whenever a nation takes part in a war, all the various parties are combined into a single front, all their inclinations become a single desire, and any dissidence or disobedience in the ranks is quelled with an iron fist.

❑ Perfection of soldiery is like the perfection of leadership. Just as the issuing of orders requires wisdom, so also the execution of them requires self-control. Obedience in these matters results in enormous benefit for the whole group. Those people who are the first to raise the standard of rebellion are the ones who have been deprived of leadership when they aspire to it. 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy was an example of this type of people, who would sacrifice the future of the nation in pursuit of his personal ambitions.

❑ As for the archers who disobeyed the order to stay in their places at all cost, they were affected by a period of weakness and negligence, during which the traces of worldly desires in their hearts were revived and led to the consequences which are well known. Thus when the Muslims were shocked at the disaster which befell them, Allāh (ﷻ) pointed out that they themselves were the cause: He (ﷻ) did not break His promise to them nor did He (ﷻ) deprive them of their rights.

﴾And was it so, when a disaster struck you, though you had struck [them with a disaster] twice [as great], that you said: How is this?

Say [to them, Muhammad]: It is from yourselves. Indeed, Allāh is able to do all things.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 165)

For any deed to be accepted, Islām stipulates that it must be based on one faith, sincerity and dedication to Allāh (ﷻ).

The Martyrs of Uḥud

❑ The Quraish made their way to Makkah in haste, as if they were unsure of the victory they had achieved after their defeat in the first half of the battle. The Muslim, on the other hand, nursed their wounded and prepared graves for their dead, who would rise from them on the Day of Judgement to meet their Lord.

❑ Ibn Isḥāq narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Who will look for Sa'd ibn Rabī' for me? Is he among the living or the dead?"

A man from the Anṣār responded and went in search of Sa'd. He found him wounded among the dead he was still breathing. He said: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) ordered me to see whether you were among the living or the dead."

He replied, "I am among the dead, so convey my *salaam* to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and say to him, 'Sa'd ibn Rabi' tells you: May Allāh (ﷻ) reward you on our behalf the best of what He rewarded a prophet on his people's behalf! And convey my salaam to your clan and say to them: Indeed, Sa'd ibn Rabi' says to you: there is no excuse for you in front of Allāh (ﷻ) if your Prophet is killed while you still have eyes which blink!"

The man reported: "Then he died before I could move, and I came back to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him the news."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the martyrs to be buried where they had been killed, and he refused to allow them to be transferred to their family graves.

Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh said: "On the day of Uḥud my aunt brought my father to be buried in our graves. However, the Prophet's (ﷺ) announced that the martyred should all be returned to their places of martyrdom.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) would wrap every two martyrs in one cloth and then say: "Which of the two memorized more of the Qur'ān?" If one of them was pointed out he would put him first in the grave, saying, "I am a witness over these."

He ordered them to be buried with the blood on them and neither prayed (the funeral prayers) over them nor washed them. When he had finished burying them he said: "I am a witness over these. There is no-one who is injured on behalf of Allāh (ﷻ) but Allāh (ﷻ) will raise him on the Day of Judgment with the blood dripping from his wound. The colour will be the colour of blood and the scent that of musk."

❑ The Battle of Uḥud left traces on the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ) which stayed with him until his last days in the world. On this towering mountain around Yathrib he bade farewell to the dearest of men and those closest to his heart. The chosen, purified few who had carried the burden of the *da'wah*, opposed relatives and strangers for the pleasure of Allāh (ﷻ), been estranged on account of their beliefs before and after the Hijrah, spent their money, fought, persevered and helped others to persevere, now lay in their final resting-place on this mountain as fate had decreed for them. The Prophet (ﷺ) would remember the characters of these heroes and say: "Uḥud is a mountain which loves us and which we love." When the time for his death approached, he paid his last homage to those heroes by visiting their graves, praying for them and exhorting the people by their example.

'Utbah ibn 'Āmir narrated:

"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) prayed over the martyrs in Uḥud after eight years as one who was bidding farewell to the living and the dead. Then he mounted the pulpit (*mimbar*) and said: "I shall soon be gone from you. I am over you. Your meeting - place will be the spring (of paradise) and I can see it from where I stand now. I am not afraid that you will revert to idolatry,

However, I am afraid of the worldly life (*dunya*) for you that you will rival one another for it." [55]

'Uqbah continued: "It was the last look that I had of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

❑ The Muslim buried their feelings of frustration in their hearts and did not yield to the sorrows of what had befallen them. The abundance, of their enemies surrounding them was a reason for them to fight off their fatigue and make a show of strength so as to deter any would-be attackers. The defeat at Uḥud was an opportunity seized by the hypocrites and Jews as well as all those who held some grudge against Muhammad (ﷺ), his religion and his Companions. Madīnah flared up: all those who had previously concealed their enmity now exposed it, and the nonbelievers began talking of Allāh's desertion of his Prophet (ﷺ).

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) saw that he should reorganize his men quickly and form a new force of the injured and uninjured to the Quraish and prevent them from attacking again. The Battle of Uḥud took place on Saturday, 15 *Shawwāl*, and the force was organized and dispatched on Sunday, 16 *Shawwāl*. The Prophet (ﷺ) and those with him travelled until they reached Ḥamra Al-Asad and approached Abū Sufyān's force.

❑ The men of the Quraish, having reached the open air, began reflecting on what had taken place. They blamed one another, saying: "You haven't achieved anything you had them in your grasp, then you let them go without slaughtering. Now they still have men to resist you! "However, this thought was swept away as soon as the Quraish learnt of the Muslims' mobilization of their forces. The idolaters were confused as to what to do. Should they turn back and fight a war, the result of which was uncertain, and which might cause them the loss of their victory? Or should they proceed at once to Makkah? In the latter case the position of the Muslims would improve and the bitterness of their defeat would be diluted.

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[55] *Saḥīḥ*: narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad and Al-Bayhaqi.

❑ Abū Sufyān decided upon a safe return, while at the same time sending someone to the Muslims to scare them off by announcing that the Quraish were on their tail and ready to exterminate them after they had seen the mistake of leaving them alone! The Muslims camped at Ḥamrā Al-Asad, where the spy came and urged them to return to Madīnah and save themselves from the Makkans whom they had no hope of defeating. Nevertheless, the Muslims accepted the challenge, and remained in their camp with fires lit for three nights, waiting for the Quraish. The latter decided that it was best for them to return to Makkah in safety, and, upon hearing this, the Muslims returned to Madīnah to enter it once again. Heads high and confident in themselves.

❑ Concerning this incident the following āyah was revealed:

﴾Those to whom men said: Indeed, the people have gathered against you; therefore fear them. The threat of danger only increased the faith of them and they cried: Allāh is sufficient for us! Most Excellent is He in whom we trust! So they returned with grace and favour from Allāh, and no harm touched them. They followed the good pleasure of Allāh, and Allāh is of infinite bounty.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 173-174)

The Effects of Uḥud

Many of those who had concluded truces with Islām or sheltered under it rebelled. The defeat at Uḥud was of a greater effect than the Muslims realized, in spite of their show of strength at Hamra Al-Asad. The bedouin Arabs became bold and entertained hopes of raiding Madīnah and carrying off all its property. The Jew, too, mocked openly, and their attitude toward the Muslims quickly deteriorated. One of the hardest things to do is to lead a people after sustaining a great defeat or leading an ideology after a crucial loss, even though one may think light of hardships and persevere under the most trying conditions.

❑ The fourth year of the Hijrah came and the Muslims had still not recovered from their wounds at Uḥud. Time does not wait for anyone; however: the bedouin began moving towards

Madīnah, thinking that whatever was in it would be easy prey. The first to prepare to attack Madīnah were the Banū Asad, but the Prophet (ﷺ) lost no time in dispatching Abū Salāmah at the head of one hundred and fifty men to surprise the tribe in their homes before they could carry out any raids. Abū Salāmah managed to rout his enemies and carry off their goods without much trouble and he returned victorious to Madīnah. He was one of the best leaders of the *Ṣaḥabah* and one of the earliest to accept Islām and wage *jihād*. Nevertheless, he returned from this expedition in an exhausted state, for the wound he had received at Uḥud became inflamed and he died soon afterwards.

❑ Although Khālid ibn Sufyān al Hudhalī attempted to gather a force to attack the Muslims the Prophet (ﷺ) dispached 'Abdullāh ibn Anīs after him, and he was killed while still attempting to mobilize the bedouin tribes against Madīnah. The tribe of Hudhayl avenged their kinsmen by handing over the Muslim prisoners who were captured in the Battle of Raji' to the people of Makkah.

❑ The story of Rajī' began when a delegation from the tribes of 'Udal and Al-Qarrah approached the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked for men to teach them the principles of Islām and the recitation of the Qur'ān, for the news of Islām had reached them. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent with them a number of *du'at* (missionaries) under the command of 'Āṣim ibn Thābit. When they were between 'Asafān and Makkah, near the waters of Hudhayl, the delegation acted treacherously and called to Hudhayl for support in killing missionaries. Although the latter took arms in self-defence, what could a small number of men who could be counted on one's fingers do in face of a hundred or so archers whose tribe was behind them ready to assist? Thus 'Āṣim and his men were soon killed and three of them taken prisoner: Khubayb, Zayd ibn al Dathnah and 'Abdullāh ibn Tāriq. The Hudaylis took them to Makkah to sell them there, and this meant handing them over to likely killers. The group of missionaries were with the Prophet (ﷺ) in the battle of Badr and Uḥud, and the people of Makkah were awaiting the

opportunity to wreak vengeance on them. 'Abdullāh tried to escape from this fate and was killed. The other two were handed over to the Makkans.

❑ Safwān ibn Umayyah bought Zayd to kill him in revenge for his father. They took him outside the sanctuary and a group of people gathered around him.

Among them was Abū Sufyān, who said: "I beseech you by God, Zayd. Would you prefer Muhammad (ﷺ) to be in your place here with us, about to be beheaded, while you are at home with your family?"

❑ He replied: "By Allāh (ﷻ), I should not like Muhammad (ﷺ) to be where he is now and being hurt by a thorn while I remained at home with my family."

❑ Abū Sufyān said: "I never seen anyone loving anyone as Muhammad's (ﷺ) Companions love him." Then Zayd (رضي الله عنه) was killed.

❑ 'Uqbah ibn al Hārith bought Khubayb to kill him in revenge for his father. When they took him out of the sanctuary to crucify him, he said,

"If you think you can allow me to pray two *raka't*, then do so."

❑ They said: "All right. You can pray."

❑ He prayed two *raka't*, which he performed well, then he turned to the people and said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), I should have prolonged my prayer if it were not for the fact that you might think that I am afraid of death." Khubayb was the first to start the Sunnah of praying two *raka't* before execution.

They hoisted him onto the wooden frame, and when they had secured him, he said: "O Allāh (ﷻ) surely we have conveyed the message of your Messenger, so convey to him this morning what is being done to us. O Allāh (ﷻ), encircle their numbers, kill them all and do not let any of them escape.[56] Then he faced death, chanting:

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[56] Ibn Hishām narrated it from Ibn Isḥāq on the authority of 'Āṣim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatādah. It is *mursal* and its chain would be sound if it were not for this. However, Bukhārī narrates it in his *ṣaḥīḥ* collection on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), and it contains the chant quoted.

I do not care when I am killed as a Muslim
On which side I fall for Allāh's cause;
That is for His pleasure, and if He wills,
He will bless the severed limbs of my corpse.

The Muslims were grieved by the loss of 'Āṣim and his group, and especially by the death of the captives in this treacherous manner. It meant the loss of a number of brave missionaries, of whom Islām was in dire need in that period of its history. Furthermore, the Muslims became even more apprehensive at the way in which these men were hunted down. It showed the degree of malice the Arabs had for the believers, their disdain for their lives and their temerity in attacking them without fear of revenge.

❑ Nevertheless, although this incident compelled the Muslims to check before sending any delegation to spread Islām among the far-off tribes and unknown places, yet it was absolutely necessary to send missionaries, however high the cost might be. This made the Prophet (ﷺ) look at these sacrifices as something inevitable, just as a merchant may prefer to bear his losses for a time in the hope of making greater profits, rather than withdrawing from the market and allowing his business to fail. This is the secret of the Prophet's (ﷺ) response to Abū Barā (ﷺ) 'Āmir ibn Mālik (ﷺ), known as the spear-thrower, when he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to send a delegation of missionaries to spread Islām among the tribes of Najd. The Prophet (ﷺ) expressed his fear for the safety of his men amid wild tribes whose word could not be trusted. However, Abū Barā undertook to stand surety for them saying "I am protégé and (like) neighbour for them,[57] and so the missionaries left Madīnah and travelled until they reached Bi'r Ma'unah. They were seventy selected men known as reciters of the Qur'ān, who

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[57] Narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq as *mursal* with a sound chain. Also Ṭabarāni narrated it from Ibn Isḥāq as in *Al-Majma'*. Al-Ṭabrāni also narrated it on the authority of Ka'b ibn Mālik (ﷺ), and Al-Haythami said its narrators were authentic.

would gather firewood during the day and pray during the night. Their lives were dedicated to struggle and desire for the Hereafter. When the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered them to travel to covey the message of Allāh (ﷻ), they left, not knowing that they were all hurrying towards their deaths in a land whose valleys were teeming with the faithless.

❑ When the reciters reached Bi'r Ma'ūnah, they sent one of them, Ḥarām ibn Milḥān, to 'Āmir ibn al Ṭufayl, the leader of unbelief in those parts. Ḥarām handed 'Āmir the Prophet's (ﷺ) letter in which he invited him to Islām. 'Āmir did not look at the letter but ordered a man to assassinate the bearer of the letter. Ḥarām became aware of it only when he felt a heavy blow piercing his back and entering his chest. His response to this sudden martydom was like that of a man who had the desire for martyrdom for a long time as he shouted: "I have succeeded, by the Lord of the Ka'bah!"

❑ 'Āmir persisted in his tyranny and solicited the aid of allies to continue the aggression against the Muslims. He was joined by the tribes of Ri'l, Dhakwān and Al-Qārrah, and together they attacked the peaceful reciters. The latter, seeing death approaching them from all sides, hurriedly drew their swords to defend themselves. But to no avail. The cruel bedouin swept down upon them in their camp and exterminated them to the last man.

❑ On the trail of the reciters were two men who did not witness this tragedy. One of them was 'Amr ibn Umayyah al Damri. They learnt of the sad news only from the flocks of wild birds flying towards the camp and circling over the corpses scattered on the sand. They went to look and saw the bodies covered with blood, and the horsemen who had attacked them standing around.

"Āmir's comrade said to him: What do you think we should do?"

❑ 'Amr replied:

"I think that we should return to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and tell him the news."

❑ However, his comrade did not like this suggestion. Among the martyrs was a close friend of his by the name of Al-Mundhir, so he replied: "I should not like to desert a place

where Al-Mundhir was killed. I should not wish to remain alive to tell his story to others!" At this he swooped upon the bedouin, fighting them until he was killed. 'Amr was taken prisoner but later released by 'Amr ibn-al Tufayl on behalf of his mother who had been forced to free a slave.

❑ 'Amr returned to the Prophet (ﷺ), carrying with him the news of the terrible calamity: the murder of seventy selected Muslims. This calamity reminded them of Uḥud, except that those martyrs had succumbed in a clear fight whereas these had succumbed to treachery. This incident filled the hearts of the Muslims with anger. They were affected not only by the great loss of lives, but what injured their feeling even more was paganism's deep malice and enmity for Islām and the Muslims, who were now exposed by this incident. This was malice and enmity which could cast aside all principles of honour and loyalty, and allow those who had the means to harm the Muslims however and whenever they liked.

❑ On his way to Madīnah 'Amr met two men whom he thought to be the sons of 'Āmir, so he killed them in revenge for his Companions. Afterwards he found out that they were from the tribe of Kilāb, who had entered into a treaty with the Muslims. When he reached Madīnah and told the Prophet (ﷺ) what had happened, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to the assembly:[58] Your Companions have been killed, and they have made a request to their Lord, saying: Our Lord, inform our brothers that we are pleased with You and You with us.[59] Then he said to 'Amr: "You have killed two men, and I shall indeed pay their blood money." He then busied himself collecting the blood money from the Muslims and their Jewish allies.

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[58] Narrated by Bukhārī by way of Hishām ibn 'Urwah from his father as *mursal*. However, he also narrated it with a full chain on the authority of Anas (ﷺ), and Al Ṭabarāni on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd.

[59] Narrated by Al Ṭabarāni and Ibn Hishām by way of Ibn Isḥāq as *mursal* as already mentioned.

❑ Islām's success in strengthening its foothold in the Arabian peninsula caused many hearts to burn, and there is no doubt that the Muslims' hope in the future and expectancy of more victories only kindled more malice in their enemies. The detractors would describe the Muslims as deluded:

﴾When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease said: Their religion has deluded these people. He who puts his trust in Allāh [will find that] indeed, Allāh is Mighty, Wise.﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 49)

❑ This hatred had lain dormant for a time after the victory of Badr. In fact this victory may have encouraged a fair number of the weak-hearted and uncertain elements to come under the banner of the new religion. However, when the tide turned against the Muslims and they suffered defeat after defeat, the suppressed hatred burst forth and the enemies of Islām began attacking it on all fronts. We have said that the Prophet (ﷺ) understood the situation after Uḥud, and he therefore made a great effort to regain the status of dominance for the Muslims. Thus the struggle between the two forces grew more intense than ever. On the one hand the idolaters were seizing every opportunity to direct a blow against the Muslims as in Uḥud or even harder, while on the other the Muslims were trying to wipe out its traces forever. Nevertheless, as already explained, the Muslims suffered enormous losses at Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah, and the faith underwent one trial after another. In spite of these tragedies, however, the faithful people did not lose their contact with their Lord or their confidence in the future. They began returning a blow for a blow, and when the Jews began their moves in such a critical state to assassinate the Prophet (ﷺ), he lost no time in inflicting swift punishment on them.

The Exile of the Banū al Naḍīr

The story of their treachery was that the Prophet (ﷺ) went to the homes of the Banū al Naḍīr to ask them to assist in paying the blood money for the two men who were killed accidentally by 'Amr. When he negotiated with them, they showed willingness to assist, so he sat by the wall of their homes, waiting for them to fulfil their promise. However, the Jews conferred with one another secretly and the following proposal was made: " You will never again find the man in such a position, in comfort and at ease. So who will go up to the top of this house and throw a rock on him and rid us of him forever?"

❑ When the Jews were about to execute their plan, the Prophet (ﷺ) was warned by inspiration of the imminent danger, so he quickly got up and made his way back to Madīnah. His Companions, in the meantime, had noticed his absence and had gone in search of him. Then a man coming from Madīnah informed them that he saw him entering the city, so they hurried to meet him. When they reached him, he told them of the plot of the Jews to kill him. Later he learnt that the man who had volunteered to throw the stone on him was 'Amr ibn Jaḥash, and the Prophet (ﷺ) did not spare him or his people. He summoned Muhammad ibn Maslamah, ordered him to go to the Banū al Naḍīr and tell them to leave Madīnah never to return. He gave them ten days, and said that if after then he found any of them in Madīnah he would cut their heads off.[60]

❑ The Jews had no option but to leave and they began to prepare for the journey. However, the hypocrites in Madīnah, at the head of whom was 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, sent a message to them saying: "Stay where you are. We shall help you. We shall help you against Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions." The

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[60] Narrated by Ibn Sa'd in his *Ṭabaqāt Kubra* under the Battle of Banū al Naḍīr without a chain. However, Al-Bayhaqi narrated it as in Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Muhammad ibn Maslamah that the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him to Banū al Naḍīr and ordered him to give them a respite of three days. The whole chain is trustworthy except for Mahmud ibn Maslamah, whom Ibn Abi Ḥātim described but did not authenticate or condemn. He is therefore an unknown entity.

Jews regained their confidence and they decided upon resistance. They sent to the Prophet (ﷺ), saying: "We shall not leave, so do whatever you wish."

❑ Then they secured themselves in their fortresses and prepared for battle. Their will to resist was increased even further when they saw that Ibn Ubayy was preparing two thousand men to help them. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) at once put a stop to this by challenging anyone who wished to join them from the other Jewish tribes or the Arab idolaters. He laid siege to the houses of the Banū al Naḍīr, and ordered their date palms to be cut down.[61]

The situation became critical and the Jews began to see death staring them in the face. Their supporters were petrified with fear and no-one dared to send them relief or defend them. For the Muslims to enter into a direct confrontation with their enemies at this crucial time was a dangerous decision, the outcome of which was unknown. You have seen now the Arabs joined forces against the Muslims and tore their delegations to pieces. In addition to this, the Jews of Banū al Naḍīr were of reasonable strength, a fact which made it unlikely that they would surrender and which made fighting them an undesirable undertaking. However, the situation resulting from the tragedy of Bi'r Ma'unah and the previous one had made the Muslims more susceptible to the crimes of assassination and treachery, to which they were now exposed individually and collectively. Their hatred for the perpetrators of such acts was doubled, and therefore they were determined to fight the Banū al Naḍīr after learning of their attempt to assassinate the Prophet (ﷺ), no matter what the consequences. Fortunately, the result in their favour came sooner than they expected. The Jews succumbed and surrendered to the victors, who permitted them to go into exile from their homes taking as much wealth as their camels

[61] This order is authentic. It is narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim as well as others on the authority of Ibn 'Umar.

could carry except their weapons.[62]

❑ Concerning this battle the whole of Sūrat *Al-Ḥashr* was revealed, describing the expulsion of the Jews: the first part

﴾He it is Who has caused those of the People of the Scripture who disbelieved leave their homes into the first exile. You deemed not that they would leave, you did not think while they thought that their strongholds would protect them from Allāh. But Allāh reached them from a place which they had not considered, and cast terror in their hearts so that they ruined their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers. So learn a lesson, O you who have eyes!﴿ (Qur'ān 59: 2)

Then the Qur'ān exposed the attitude of the hypocrites who tried to help the Jews in their treachery and war, and who incited them to fight the Muslims by promising them reinforcements and equipment:

﴾Have you not observed those who are hypocrites [how] they tell their brethren who disbelieve among the People of the Scripture: if you are driven out we surely shall go out with you, and we shall never obey anyone against you, and if you are attacked we shall certainly help you. And Allāh bears witness that really they are liars. [For] indeed if they are driven out they do not leave with them, and indeed if they are attacked they do them not help and indeed if they would help them, would turn to their back and would not have been victorious.﴿ (Qur'ān 59: 11-12)

❑ With this victory, which the Muslims achieved without sacrifice, their dominance in Madīnah was confirmed and the hypocrites desisted from declaring their hidden plots. The Prophet (ﷺ) was then able to turn his attention to suppressing

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[62] Narrated by Al-Ḥākim on the authority of 'Ā'ishah with the inclusion of the *āyāh*. Al-Ḥākim said it was authentic according to the stipulation of Bukhārī and Muslim, and Al Dhahabī agreed with him. In fact, it is authentic but not according to their stipulation, since Zayd ibn al Mubārak al San'ani and his Shaikh Muhammad ibn Thaur are not of their men.

the bedouin who had caused injury to the Muslims after Uḥud by pouncing upon the delegations of missionaries and killing them without compunction. In order to teach those treacherous tribes a lesson, the Prophet (ﷺ) marched from Madīnah through the deserts of Najd, seeking revenge for his Companions who were slain in Rajī‘ and Bi'r Ma‘ūnah and to instil fear into the hearts of those ruthless bedouin so that they would not attempt to repeat their atrocities on the Muslims. In the realization of this aim he undertook a variety of military and punitive expeditions which were so successful that the bedouin who had terrorized the countryside with their pillaging and plundering, and who had put a stop to the *da‘wah* for the time, would flee into the mountains at the very news of the Muslims approaching. The main culprits were the Banū Lihyan, Banū Muharik and Banū Tha‘labah of the Ghaṭafān tribe.

❑ Having broken the power of these tribes and put an end to their menace, the Muslims once more began equipping themselves to confront their enemy, for a year had elapsed and the rendez-vous with the Quraish had come. Now was the test to see which of the two was more worth of survival.

The Second Badr

Abū Sufyān was not eager to fulfil the promise he had made when leaving Uḥud. He left Makkah with a heavy heart, thinking of the consequences of fighting the Muslims, and, as yet, he had not made sufficient preparations as he would have liked. His people had been defeated at Badr in spite of their superior numbers and equipment, and they barely managed gain victory at Uḥud after almost being defeated. If it had not been for the error made by the army of Allāh (ﷻ), the Quraish would not have made any gains in the battle. Thus Abū Sufyān had hardly reached Dhahran when it occurred to him to make a retreat, and he shouted to his men: "O people of the Quraish, only a year of fertility will be beneficial for you. In which you grow trees and drink milk. However, this year is a barren year

and I am going back, so you go back too." Thus did the Quraish withdraw from the expected battle.

The Muslims, however, mobilized themselves for the encounter with the Quraish with all fervour. They reached the wells of Badr and camped around them, announcing the fulfilment of their word and their readiness for the promised fight. For eight days they remained waiting for the approach of the Quraish, removing the last specks of mud which Uḥud had thrown at their reputation. That was in Sha'ban of the fourth year after the Hijrah.

Dumat al Jandal

The reins of control were transferred into the hands of the Muslims after the Quraish backed down from the challenge of meeting them. Thus they turned their attention to the north, having subdued the south. The north of the peninsula bordered on the Roman empire, and the Arabs who lived there feared no-one after Caesar. Caesar himself would not have expected a power to arise in the Arabian peninsula which could challenge or ignore him.

❑ The news filtered into Madīnah that the tribes around Dūmat al Jandal near Syria were waylaying passers-by and plundering their belongings. They had become so arrogant that they began thinking of attacking Madīnah, and a great horde gathered to make this raid. The Prophet (ﷺ) thus marched with a thousand men, resting during the day and travelling during the night surprised the enemy. The distance between Yathrib and Dūmat al Jandal was fifteen days, which the Muslims traversed with the help of a skilled guide. When they reached the camp of their enemy, they swept down upon it in a surprise attack and the hordes fled helter-skelter. The Muslims took as booty all their livestock which they had left behind and which belonged to the Banū Tamīm. The Prophet (ﷺ) spent a number of days in the area, sending out detachments in various

directions. No-one remained to challenge them and eventually the Muslims returned to Madīnah. This was in Rabi'I-1 of the fifth year after the Hijrah.

❑ When Islām was just a call challenging the prevailing system, opposition to it took the form of overtness and provocation without fear of the consequences. However, when it gained power its enemies took the course followed by suppressed instincts. Schemes and plots became the order of the day along with the means about which the strong can boast. The conspiracies of the weak under cover of darkness are no less dangerous than the damage caused by the strong on the battlefield. On the contrary, a person may be hurt more seriously by malicious slander than by a physical blow. In wars without principles all sorts of means are used to hurt the enemy, some of which a noble-man would be ashamed to stoop to.

❑ The hypocrites in Madīnah, in their hostility the Prophet (ﷺ) and his *da'wah*, resorted to a means in which is clearly reflected the depravity of the human soul when it is ruled by malice and overcome by weakness. It was the method of insinuations at certain times and accusations at other times. The stronger the position and influence of the Muslims became, the greater the enmity and spite of the hypocrites. They had tried to side with the Jews when the Prophet (ﷺ) announced his intention to exile them. However, when the tide of Islām continued to flow and defeat did not control it, and the hostile tribes began to disappear one by one, these hypocrites joined the ranks of the Muslims. Their evil intentions remained hidden except for slips of the tongue and lapses in their behaviour. This attitude of theirs was the cause of serious trouble from which the Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers suffered greatly.

❑ This was very clear in the battle of Banū al Muṣṭaliq. News had reached the Prophet (ﷺ) that this tribe was gathering its forces to attack him, and that its leader, Al Ḥārith ibn Abī Ḍirār, had made full preparations for the march. The Prophet

(ﷺ) with the Muslims, therefore hurried to extinguish this source of trouble before it got out of hand. On this occasion all of the hypocrites who were not accustomed to going into battle were with the prophet. Perhaps their confidence that he would be victorious led them to join this expedition, not in support of the faith, but in the desire for worldly benefit.

❑ The Muslims arrived at the oasis called Al-Muraysi', around which were gathered the Banū al Muṣṭaliq, and the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered 'Umar (ﷺ) to propose Islām to them.

'Umar (ﷺ) accordingly shouted: "Say 'there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ)', and by it protect yourselves and your wealth!" They refused, however, and the two sides exchanged showers of arrows. The Prophet (ﷺ) then ordered his men to attack and they did so in unison. Not a single idolater escaped: they were all taken prisoners after ten of them were killed and one Muslim martyred, the latter being the result of a mistake. Thus the whole tribe and all that they possessed fell into the hands of the Muslims.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) saw that he should treat them kindly. Thus when Al-Ḥārith, the leader of the tribe, came seeking his daughter who was among the prisoners, the Prophet (ﷺ) returned her to her father and then proposed to marry her.[63] When the marriage ceremony was completed, the Muslims felt ashamed that they should keep in captivity the in-laws of the Prophet (ﷺ) and so they freed them all. Thus Juwayriyah, daughter of Al-Ḥārith, was the cause of great good fortune for her people: one hundred households were set free on the occasion of her wedding.

❑ This easy victory was, however, sullied by the actions of the hypocrites, which made the Muslims forget its sweet taste. A servant of 'Umar (ﷺ), who was drawing water for him from the

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[63] This is not correct. Ibn Hishām pointed this out in his *Sīrah* when he quoted the narration without a chain and said "The authentic version is that the Prophet (ﷺ) set her free by paying the required sum, and married her without proposing to her father since she was a prisoner." This is narrated by Ibn Isḥāq on the authority of 'Ā'ishah with an authentic chain. It is also narrated by Aḥmad and Ibn Hishām by another chain and this version contains all the story of the release of the prisoners.

water of Al-Muraysi‘, collided with a servant of the Banū ‘Auf of the Khazraj tribe and they almost fought over the drawing of the water a usual thing with empty headed servants. The first shouted "O *muhajirīn*!" while the other shouted, "O Anṣār!"

❑ ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, who was among a group from his tribe, listened to the uproar, and seeing the opportunity presenting itself to arouse their feelings and revive the flames of *jahilīyah* which Islām had smothered, said: "Now they have done it! They have vied with us and tried to out number us in our own country. No, by God, if we return to Madīnah, the mightier will soon drive out the weaker." Then he turned to his people, who still maintained some dignity criticizing them and urging them to repudiate the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. Zayd ibn Arqam went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him what had happened, but Ibn Ubayy hurried to the Prophet (ﷺ) to clear himself by denying the charges.

Those present decided to accept the word of Ibn Ubayy in deference to his status, and they said: "The boy (that is, Zayd) made a mistake. He did not remember correctly what was said."

❑ The reality of the situation, however, did not escape the Prophet (ﷺ), and he was saddened by the incident. Nevertheless, he thought the best cure was to occupy the people with other matters so that its traces might be removed. He thus issued the order to pack up and travel at an hour when it was not normal to travel. He marched with them the whole day until it was evening and the whole night until it was morning and a part of the new day until the sun troubled them. Then he camped with them, and no sooner did they touch the ground than they fell asleep. Later he resumed the march until they reached Madīnah.

❑ Then came the revelation of Sūrat *Al Munāfiqūn*, the chapter entitled "The Hypocrites", in which was the confirmation of what Zayd ibn Arqam had reported:

﴿They say: Surely, if we return to Al-Madīnah the stronger will soon drive out the weaker; when might belongs to Allāh and to His messenger and the believers; but the hypocrites do not know.﴾ (Qur'ān 63: 8)

❑ It never occurred to anyone that this hasty return would soon reveal a dastardly slander, which was hatched by Ibn Ubayy and spread among the people until it became cancerous. This man had made a false oath after denying his own words. If the coward had gone to seek help from its evil consequences, that would have been much better for him. Yet, in spite of the forbearance with which he was excused, it only increased his depravity and hostility. There was a great difference between the various kinds of men who opposed Islām and its Prophet (ﷺ). Abū Jahl was an inveterate enemy of all who entered this religion. He was a stubborn tyrant whose obstinacy was never-ending. However, he was like a marauding hyena which was no good at manoeuvring. He took to the sword in broad daylight and continued to fight with it until he was killed.

❑ As for 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, he did like a deceptive scorpion and would sting the unsuspecting victims under the cover of darkness. He began to spread slander which would raise suspicions. In his misguidance he sank to lower depths: he could not care less if he attacked the honour of those who had unblemished characters: He weaved accusations around them which would make the chaste and upright women weep tears.

❑ On the Prophet's (ﷺ) return from the expedition of the Banū al Muṣṭaliq to Madīnah, the slander was planted and grew. The enemies of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger strove hard to fan its flames in all directions. With this new technique of waging war on Islām they sought to destroy the Prophet's (ﷺ) household around him, degrade the status of the man closest to himself, and thereafter leave the masses of Muslims to wander in a maze of sorrow and regret.

❑ To fulfil this aim Ibn Ubayy permitted himself to accuse of indecency a lady past the stage of innocent childhood, who knew no evil and intended no sin, who learnt of life only in lofty orbit of prophethood, who was nurtured in the home of a truthful man and educated to be the Companion of a Prophet in this world and the next. This strange slander was snatched up by the common folk, who were in the throes of perplexity, not knowing

the extent of the danger which lay hidden in the acceptance and spreading of such talk.

❑ Here is an account of the fabricated accusation from the lips of the lady herself who was its target and whose innocence was thereafter established.

The Story of the Slander

Ā'ishah said:

❑ Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) intended to travel he would draw lots between his wives, and whoever had her lot drawn would accompany him. When it was the expedition of the Banū al Muṣṭaliq my lot was drawn over their, so I travelled with him. In those days the wives would eat lightly; they did not like meat because they would put on weight. While the camel was being saddled I would sit in my litter. Then the men would come and pick me up by taking hold of the lower part of the litter, lifting it up and putting it on the back of the camel, where they would fasten it with a rope. Then they would set off.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) had finished that journey he turned back, and when he was nearing Madīnah he halted and spent part of the night there. Then one of his men announced that they should be on their way. While they were getting ready, I went out for a certain purpose, wearing a necklace of mine around my neck. When I had finished it slipped from my neck without my knowing, and when I returned to the camel I felt my neck for it but could not find it. Meanwhile the group had already started off, and I returned to the place where I had been and looked for it until I found it. The men who had been saddling my camel for me came, and having already finished the preparation, picked up the litter, thinking that I was in it. Then they took the camel by its head and went off with it. I went back to the camp and not a soul was there: the men had gone. So I wrapped myself in my gown and lay down in my place. I knew that If I were missed the men would come back for me.

❑ By Allāh (ﷻ), I had just lain down when Safwān ibn Al-Mu'aṭṭal al Sulami passed by. He had remained behind for some reason and had not spent the night with the group. He saw my form and came and stood over me. He used to see me before the veil was prescribed for us, so when he recognized me he exclaimed: "To Allāh (ﷻ) we belong and to Him we shall return, the wife of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)!" while I was wrapped in my garments. He asked: 'What has kept you back? May Allāh (ﷻ) shower His mercy on you!' I did not reply. Then he brought his camel over and said, "Mount" and stood back from me. I mounted and he took the camel by its head and set off in search of the group. By Allāh (ﷻ), we did not overtake them nor was I missed until the morning when they had halted. When they had rested, the man appeared leading the camel with me riding it. Then the slanderers said what they said and the camp was disturbed, but, by Allāh (ﷻ), I had no knowledge of that.

❑ Then we arrived in Madīnah, and shortly afterwards I became very ill and so heard nothing of the matter. However, the talk reached the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and my parents and they did not mention a thing to me, except that I missed some of the Prophet's (ﷺ) accustomed kindness to me during this illness.

I found that whenever he came in to see me while my mother was nursing me, he would say: "How is she?" and would say nothing more, until I could bear it no longer.

❑ I said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), will you permit me to go over to my mother?"

He replied: "As you please." So I was taken to my mother's house, knowing nothing of what had happened until I recovered from my illness some twenty days later. We were a simple people and our houses did not contain those closets which the foreigners had. We loathed and detested them. Instead, we used to go out into the open spaces of Madīnah and the women would go out every night. One night I went with Umm Mistah. By Allāh (ﷻ), she was walking with me when she tripped over her gown and

exclaimed: "Wretched by Mistah!"

I said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), it is a bad thing to say of one of the *muhajirīn* who fought at Badr!"

Then she said, "Haven't you heard the news, daughter of Abū Bakr (ﷺ)?"

I replied: "What news?" and she told me of what the slanders were spreading. I said: "Did that really happened?"
She replied, "Yes, by Allāh (ﷻ), it did happen!"

❑ And, by Allāh (ﷻ), I was unable to do what I had come to do, so I went back and by Allāh (ﷻ), I did not stop crying until I felt that my heart would break.

I said to my mother: "May Allāh (ﷻ) forgive you, the people were talking about all that and you did not mention a word of it to me?"

She replied: "My little daughter, do not be grieved for, by Allāh (ﷻ), seldom is there a beautiful woman married to a man who loves her and having co-wives but they gossip about her and people do the same."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) had stood up and exhorted the people, although I had no knowledge of it. He praised Allāh (ﷻ), then said:

O people, what is the matter with certain men that they worry me about my family and say about them what is not true? By Allāh (ﷻ), I know only good of them, and they say the same about a man of whom, by Allāh (ﷻ) I only know good, and who never enters a house of mine except in my company.

❑ Most of the gossip came from 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy of the Khazraj tribe, besides what Misṭaḥ and Ḥamnah bint Jaḥsh said. That was because her sister Zaynab bint Jaḥsh was a wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), and only she among all the other wives rivalled me for his favour. As for Zaynab, Allāh (ﷻ) protected her with her religion and she spoke nothing but good. However, Hamnah gossiped all she could, opposing me for her sister's sake.

❑ When the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) made his speech, Usayd ibn Hudayr said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), if they are from the Aus, let us rid you of them; and if they are from our

Khazraj brothers, then give us your orders, for, by Allāh (ﷻ), they deserve to have their heads cut off." Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah got up before that he had been thought a pious man and said:' You lie, by Allāh (ﷻ) they should not be beheaded. You have made this statement only because you know that they are of the Khazraj, and if they had been from your tribe you would not have said that."

Usayd replied, It is you who lie, by Allāh (ﷻ). You are a hypocrite arguing on behalf of the hypocrites.

❑ Feelings ran so high that fighting broke out almost between the two clans. The Prophet (ﷺ) stepped down from the pulpit and came in to see me. He called Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) and Usāmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه) and asked their opinion.

Usāmah spoke only good, saying, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), they are your family, and this is a lie and a falsehood." 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) said,

❑ However, "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), women are plentiful, and you are capable of marrying another. Ask the slave-girl and she will tell you the truth." The Prophet (ﷺ) called Burayrah and questioned her, and 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) got up and gave her a severe beating, saying: " Tell the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) the truth!"

❑ She replied, " By Allāh (ﷻ), I only know good of her, and I find no fault with 'Ā'ishah except that I would knead dough and tell her to watch it, but she would fall asleep and the sheep would come and eat it!"

❑ Another time, the Prophet (ﷺ) came in to see me while my parents and another woman of the Anṣār were with me. I was weeping and she too was weeping.

He sat down, praised Allāh (ﷻ), and then said: "Ā'ishah, you know what people say about you, so fear Allāh (ﷻ), and if you have done wrong as people say, then repent to Allāh (ﷻ), for he accepts repentance from his servants." And, by Allāh (ﷻ), as he said this to me, my tears ceased, and I did not feel them anymore. I waited for my parents to reply for me but they did not speak.

❑ By Allāh (ﷻ), I used to feel myself to be too insignificant for Allāh (ﷻ) to reveal the Qur'ān about me. However, I hoped that the Prophet (ﷺ) would see something in his dream by which Allāh (ﷻ) would clear me of the charge because He (ﷻ) knew my innocence. As for the Qur'ān being revealed about me, by Allāh (ﷻ), I felt myself to be too insignificant for that.

❑ When I saw that my parents would not speak, I said to them, " Will you not reply to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?"

They said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), we do not know what to say to him."

By Allāh (ﷻ), I do not know of a household which suffered as the family of Abū Bakr (﵁) did in those days. When they kept silent I burst into tears again, then I said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall never repent to Allāh (ﷻ) for what you mention. By Allāh (ﷻ), I know that if I admit to what the people say, although Allāh (ﷻ) knows that I am innocent, I should admit to what did not take place, and if I deny what they say, you would not believe me."

Then I searched my memory for the name of Ya'qūb and could not remember it, so I said: " I say only what the father of Yūsuf said: '(My course is) comely patience. And it is Allāh (ﷻ)Whose help is to be sought in that which you describe'."

❑ And by Allāh (ﷻ), the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) had not moved from where he was sitting when there came over him from Allāh (ﷻ) what used to come over him. So he was wrapped in his garment and a pillow was placed under his head. As for me, when I saw that, by Allāh (ﷻ), I was not afraid nor was I worried for I knew that I was innocent and that Allāh (ﷻ) would not wrong me. As for my parents, by Him (ﷻ) in Whose hands is 'Ā'ishah's soul, the Prophet (ﷺ) had hardly recovered when I thought that they would die from fear that confirmation of what the people said would come from Allāh (ﷻ). Then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recovered and sat up, and there rolled down from his face sweat like pearls on a wintry day.

He sat wiping the perspiration from his face and saying: "Cheer up, 'Ā'ishah! Allāh (ﷻ) has revealed your innocence."

I said: " Praise be to Allāh (ﷻ)."

Then he went out to the people and addressed them, reciting to them these āyāt:

﴾Indeed! They who spread the slander are a gang among you. Do not think it is a bad thing for you; no, it is good for you. To every man of them [will be paid] that which he has earned of the sin; and as for him among those, who had the greater share in it, his will be an awful doom.﴿ (Qur'ān 24: 11)

What was strange was that the punishment was meted out to those who were proved guilty of the slander, and they were Ḥassān ibn Thābit, Misṭaḥ and Ḥamnah. As for 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, the one who plotted the attack, the sower of its secret germ, he was careful not to fall under the might of the law. He implicated others but kept himself out of it.

❑ The writers of the Prophet's (ﷺ) life have it that the slander and the expedition of the Banū al Muṣṭaliq took place after the Battle of the Ditch. However, we have followed Ibn al Qayyim in considering it to be in the fifth year before the attack of the Confederates on Madīnah. Investigation supports Ibn al Qayyim and those who hold his view. You will learn that S'ad ibn Mu'ādh was killed in the Battle of the Ditch whereas he played a significant part in the expedition of the Banū al Muṣṭaliq, for the Prophet (ﷺ) complained to him[64] about Ibn Ubayy's action, and this is not consistent with the record of his martyrdom in the Battle of the Ditch if the expedition took place in the sixth year after the Hijrah.

The Battle of the Ditch / Confederates

The groups of unbelievers were certain that they would not be able to vanquish Islām if they fought it separately, but they might achieve their aim if they all attacked Islām as one alliance. The

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[64] Perhaps there is a mistake or a slip of the pen here. The Prophet (ﷺ) complained to Usayd ibn Hudayr as in the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām, but this chain is *mursal* and cannot be proved. Nevertheless, there are authentic writings on this topic which supports. Ibn al Qayyim's claim. They may be referred to in *Fatḥ-al Barī*

Jewish leaders in the peninsula were more conscious of this fact than the others. So they agreed to incite the Arabs against Islām and bring them together in a huge army to fight Muhammad (ﷺ) in a decisive battle. A handful of Jewish leaders went to the Quraish, urging them to fight, and they said: "We shall be with you against him until we extirpate him."

❑ The Quraish had failed to keep their promise with the Prophet (ﷺ) one year and it was inevitable that they should go out to fight the Muslims to salvage their reputation and fulfil their promise. And here were the Jewish leaders proposing an alliance for the very thing they desired, so there was no room for hesitation or dispute.

❑ The strange thing was that the rabbis of the Torah assured the worshippers of idols in Makkah that it was just to fight Muhammad (ﷺ), and killing him would earn them the pleasure of God because the religion of the Quraish was better than his and the customs of *jahilīyah* were better than the teachings of the Qur'ān! The Quraish were pleased with what they heard, and their stubborn wish for aggression was strengthened. They therefore promised the Jews to be with them on the march to Madīnah.

❑ The Jewish leaders left the Quraish for the bedouin of Ghaṭafān to conclude with them an alliance similar to the one with Makkah, and a number of tribes who were envious of the new faith entered into it. Thus it was that the Jewish leaders were successful in rallying the forces of unbelief against the Prophet (ﷺ) and his call. When the Muslims realized the extent of the danger surrounding them, they hurriedly drew up a plan to defend their call and their state. It was a unique plan, the like of which the Arabs had not heard before, for they were accustomed only to fighting in the open fields. This time, however, the Muslims dug a deep ditch around Madīnah from the side of the plains to separate the attackers from the defenders.

❑ The allies approached in such large numbers which the Muslims could not match. The Quraish were leading ten thousand of their own men together with their followers from

the clans of Kinānah, Tihamah and Ghaṭafān from among the leading tribes of Najd. The Muslims advanced after they had put their women and children on the secured hills of Yathrib. Then they spread out along the boundaries of their city with their backs to the hill of Sala, and stationed themselves on the bank of the ditch which they had dug with enormous effort. In this battle they numbered about three thousand fighters.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) knew that if he fought against this large army on an open plain he had little chance of victory, for what could a small group of believers do to repel such a vast tide? Thus he resorted to this strategy. It is narrated that the person who made the suggestion was Salmān al Fārisi; the Prophet (ﷺ) and his men executed and perfected it. He himself helped in the digging and the removal of soil and stones on his shoulders, and the men of status, who had never been accustomed to such labour, followed his example. Yathrib on that occasion witnessed a wonderful sight: bright faces formed into various groups, striking with axes and carrying large baskets, bare of clothing and ornaments and covered with layers accumulated dust, sweat and toil.

❑ Al-Barā ibn 'Āzib said:

"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) carried away soil on the day of the ditch until his belly was covered with dust, and he was chanting: "By Allāh (ﷻ), if it were not for Allāh (ﷻ) we should not be guided nor should we be charitable nor pray.

So send down tranquillity upon us, and keep our feet steadfast if we clash.

Surely the confederates have done us wrong: if they wish for trouble, we shall resist.[65]

This is from the poetry of 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah, with which the workers in the ditch would wipe away their fatigue by listening to its rythm and repeating the last words of its lines. The Prophet (ﷺ) would join in the refrain with them and say "

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[65] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

Laqaynā, Abaynā' (that is, we clash, we shall resist),[66] which reminds us of the labourers who dug canals in the countryside or construct buildings in the city.

❑ The defence of Islām and the fear of chaos should the idolaters be victorious made the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions undertake this heavy task with heartfelt pleasure and satisfaction in spite of the toil and difficulty which they encountered in it. Do not for one moment think that the Prophet's (ﷺ) efforts to deepen the ditch and remove the soil was play-acting, at which some leaders in our time are adept. Toiling, serious manhood in its noblest form presented itself in the example shown by the Prophet (ﷺ) in this battle. Al-Barā said: "Dust hid from me the skin of his belly, though he had much hair.[67]

❑ Yes, he took part in the labour just as his Companions did, for true manhood knows no play-acting. It was winter, the air was cold and there was a food shortage in Madīnah, which was about to come under a brutal siege. There is nothing more deadly to the spirit of resistance than despair, for if the besieged were to be exposed to its violent bouts, then humiliating surrender would be the only alternative. For this reason, the Prophet (ﷺ) strove hard to stimulate the moral strength of his men to the highest pitch, so that they might feel certain that the trial facing them was just a passing cloud which would soon disperse. Thereafter Islām would resume its march, people would enter into it in large numbers, the strongholds of tyranny would crumble before it and no plots would be hatched by them nor would any evil be feared from them. It is a rule of politics that this all-embracing hope should accompany the stages of ceaseless effort.

'Amr ibn 'Auf said:

"Along with myself were Salmān, Hudhayfah, Al Nu'mān

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[66] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Al-Barā ibn 'Āzib.

[67] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī.

ibn Muqrin and six of the Anṣār on piece of land forty feet long, and we were responsible for digging it. We dug until we reached a white rock which broke our iron blades and presented us with a problem. Salmān went to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and told him of the rock which obstructed our work and made our picks useless. The Prophet (ﷺ) came, and took Salmān's pick. Then he struck the rock with such a blow that it cracked and sparks flew from it, lighting up the gloom of the atmosphere. The Prophet (ﷺ) shouted a victorious *takbīr* (*Allahu Akbar*) and the Muslims did the same. Then he struck a second and a third time, and on each occasion the same thing occurred. The rock crumbled under the blows of the strong, wonderful man who had deep contact with heaven and earth. The Prophet (ﷺ) looked at his Companions, his large soul shining with a ray of abundant confidence and sweet hope.

Speaking to his Companions of the sparks which flew from the rock under his pick, he said: "It lit up for me in the first blow the palaces of Ḥirah and the city of Chosroes as if they were the fangs of dogs, and Jibrīl (ﷺ) informed me that my nation would conquer them. In the second it lit up the red palaces of the Roman land as if they were the fangs of dogs, and Jibrīl (ﷺ) informed me that my nation would conquer them. In the third it lit up for me the palaces of San'a' as if they were the fangs of dogs, and Jibrīl (ﷺ) informed me that my nation would conquer them. So rejoice at the good news. The Muslims rallied and said: "Praise be to Allāh (ﷻ). A true promise."[68]

❑ So when the confederates swept down upon Madīnah and laid a tight siege around it, the Muslims did not give up in despair but

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[68] Very weak in this form. It is narrated by Ibn Jarīr in his History by way of Kathīr ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn 'Awf al-Mazni from his father and from his grandfather. This Kathīr was rejected, and Al Shāfi'i and Abū Dāwūd said that he was a cornerstone of lies. Ibn Kathīr said it was a strange Ḥadīth. However, the story of the rock is to be found in Bukhārī in an abridged form on the authority of Al-Bara, and in Aḥmad's book fully by the same authority. The latter's *isnād* is good (*ḥasan*) as Ibn Ḥajar says in *Fatḥ-al Bari*. It is therefore better to use this version instead of Kathīr's.

faced the bitter reality with unshakeable hope in a noble future.

﴾And when the true believers saw the clans, they said: This is what Allāh and His messenger promised us. Allāh and His Messenger are true. It did but confirm them in their faith and resignation.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 22)

❑ As for the weaklings, the doubters and the sick of heart, they made fun of the promises of victory and thought them to be the desires of deluded people. They said of the Prophet (ﷺ): He tells you that he sees from Yathrib the palaces of Ḥirah and the city of *Kisra*, while you are there digging the ditch and you cannot pass stool [for fear]. About them Allāh says:

﴾And when the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, were saying: Allāh and His messenger promised us naught but delusion.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 12)

❑ The Battle of the Ditch was a battle of nerves more than a battle of losses, for those killed on both sides could be counted on one's fingers. Despite this, it was one of the most decisive battles in the history of Islām, since the fate of this great message in this battle could be compared to the fate of a man walking on the edge of a high precipice or on a tightrope. If his balance was lost for a second and he had no control over the situation, he would fall into the depths and be smashed to pieces. The Muslims found themselves overnight like an remote island in the middle of a hurricane which threatened to destroy it by day or night. From time to time the defenders would look out to see whether there had been a breach at any point of the defence zone. Meanwhile, the idolaters would be prowling angrily around the city looking for a weak point to break through and let loose their pent-up malice and strangulate this revolutionary religion. The Muslims knew what was awaiting them beyond this siege, so they decided to remain where they were, shooting arrows at anyone who approached and suffering the hardships of this vigil which stretched across hill and plain and whose dimensions increased as the days went by. They were as Allāh (ﷻ) described them:

﴾When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached to the throats, and you were imagining vain thoughts concerning Allāh. There were the believers sorely tried, and shaken with a mighty shock.﴿
(Qur'ān 33: 10-11)

❑ Some of the cavalry of the Quraish hated to be stationed around Madīnah in this way, for it was not in their nature to lay siege and wait the results. Thus 'Amr ibn 'Abdul Wudd, 'Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl and Ḍirar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb advanced on horseback until they were standing upon the edge of the ditch, When they saw it they said: "By God, surely this is a strategy which the Arabs never used." Then they looked for a shallow part of the ditch and whipped their horses to jump into it. The Muslims became aware of the impending danger so their cavalry, led by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ﷺ), hurried forward to block this opening.

'Alī (ﷺ) said to 'Amr ibn 'Abdul Wudd, the brave horse trainer: "O 'Amr, you had pledged to Allāh (ﷻ) that if any man of Quraish called you to one of two alternatives you would accept it. So I am calling you to Allāh (ﷻ), his Messenger and Islām (ﷺ)."

'Amr (ﷺ) replied: "I have no need of that."

'Alī (ﷺ) said: "Well I am calling you to a duel."

'Amr (ﷺ) replied: "And why, O cousin of mine, for by God I do not wish to kill you."

'Alī (ﷺ) said: "But I by Allāh (ﷻ), should love to kill you."

❑ At this, 'Amr became enraged. Dismounting from his horse he faced 'Alī (ﷺ), and the two of them fought a duel which ended with 'Alī (ﷺ) killing him, and the cavalry of the Quraish left the ditch, defeated. The children in the houses were watching the *jihād* and quick manoeuvres of the defenders to repel the aggression, as 'Abdullāh ibn al Zubayr said:

"I was put on the Day of Ditch with the women and children in the fortresses and with me was 'Umar ibn Abi Salāmah. He

bent down towards me so that I could climb on his back and watch. I saw my father attacking, once here and again there. No sooner did something rise toward him than he went to it.

In the evening, when he came to me in the fortress, I said: "Father, I saw you today and what you did."

He replied: "Did you really see me? "When I said yes he caressed me, saying: "May my father and mother be your ransom."

❑ At this crucial moment came the news that the Banū Quraydhah had broken their pact with the Prophet (ﷺ) and joined the bands of confederates who had laid the siege around Madīnah. It happened in this way. Ḥuyayy ibn Akhtab, one of the men who had instigated the Quraish and all the Arabs to wage war on Islām, came to Ka'b ibn Asad (ﷺ), the leader of the Quraydhah and knocked on his door. Ka'b (ﷺ) had locked his doors and secured his fortress when the allies attacked Madīnah, for he had decided to be faithful of his pact with the Muslims and not assist any enemy of theirs.

Nevertheless, Ḥuyayy knocked at the door and shouted to Ka'b (ﷺ): Shame on you, open up for me!"

Ka'b (ﷺ) replied; "You are a man of bad omen. I have made a pact with Muhammad (ﷺ) which I shall not break, for I have seen only faithfulness and truthfulness on his part."

❑ Ḥuyayy said: Shame on you! Open up so that I can speak to you!"

❑ I shall not,

Ka'b (ﷺ) replied.

❑ "By God, you have locked your door on me only because you are afraid that I shall eat your cornmeal with you!" This roused him and he opened the door. Ḥuyayy came in, saying: Shame on you, Ka'b (ﷺ)! I have brought to you the honour of eternity and an overflowing sea."

❑ "What is that?"

❑ "I have brought you the Quraish with their leaders and high-ranking men, and settled them at the place where the floods meet in Dumah, and the Ghaṭafān with their leaders

and high-ranking men and settled them to the side of Uḥud. They have promised and made a pact with me that they will never leave until they have exterminated Muhammad (ﷺ) and all those with him."

❑ "You have brought me, by God, the dishonour of eternity, and gloomy clouds which have shed their rain and are thundering and flashing though there is nothing left in them. Let me and my affairs alone, for I have seen only fidelity and truthfulness from Muhammad (ﷺ)." Others intervened, saying "If you do not help Muhammad (ﷺ) as the treaty demands, then leave him to his enemy."

❑ In the end, however Ḥuyayy managed to persuade all the Jews to side with him, for he made treachery attractive to them in this crucial hour. He united them with the idolaters in their fight which they proclaimed and whose target they set as the extirpation of Muhammad (ﷺ) and all those with him. In pursuit of this cruel, despicable plan, the Quraydhah brought the parchment on which the pact was written and tore it up.

Thus when the Prophet (ﷺ) sent his men to check the Quraydhah's position to the aggression of the confederate, they said: Who is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)? There is no pact between us and Muhammad (ﷺ)." Although Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh tried to remind them of their pledge, they turned a deaf ear to him. When he threatened them with the consequences of treachery and reminded them of the fate of the Banū-al Naḍīr, they replied: "Eat your father's…!" It was clear that the Quraydhah's keenness to honour the pact in the first place was only for fear of the consequences of treachery. However when they thought that the Muslims were overwhelmed from all sides and would never be able to punish them, they openly declared their unfaithfulness and joined the attacking idolaters.

The Muslims were depressed at the return of their messengers with this disturbing news, and the feelings of hatred towards the Jews grew in their hearts until they became worse in their eyes than the worshippers of Idols. They were well aware that the Children of Israel had made their choice with perfect

understanding of its meaning and consequences. They knew that it was a deliberate attempt to destroy this *Ummah* and its religion and hand it over to those who would kill its men, enslave its women and sell its children in the markets.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) wrapped himself in his garments and lay down when he received the news of the Quraydhah's treachery. He remained like that for so long that the people felt exhausted. Then the spirit of hope filled him and he rose saying: "Hear the good news of Allāh's help and victory!" He put forward the idea of offering a third of the crops of Madīnah to some of the allied tribes participating in the siege in return for their withdrawal, and he almost reached an agreement on this in his negotiations with the leaders of the Ghaṭafān.

❑ However, the leaders of the Aws and Khazraj felt hard-pressed to accept this. They appreciated the Prophet's (ﷺ) concern for them and the pain at the gathering of the Arabs against them. Nevertheless, they said: "We do not have any need of this. By Allāh (ﷻ), we shall give them nothing but the sword until Allāh (ﷻ) decides between them and us."

❑ The siege dragged on. Mūsā ibn 'Uqbah said:

"The idolaters surrounded the Muslims and formed a sort of fortress around them. They laid siege to them for nearly twenty days, and they took hold of every corner until it could not be known whether they had occupied the city or not. And they directed a heavy contingent against the Prophet's (ﷺ) house, and the Muslims fought them for a whole day until nightfall. So when *Salāt al 'Aṣr* came, the contingent was close to the Prophet's (ﷺ) home and neither he nor any of his Companions were able to pray as they would have liked. At nightfall the idolatrous contingent dispersed, and it is claimed that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"They drew us away from *Salāt al 'Aṣr*. May Allāh (ﷻ) fill their bellies and hearts with fire.[69]

[69] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by the two Sheikhs and others on the authority of 'Alī. Al-Miqrīzi "It is sound through various chains from him."

❑ When the trial became intense, many people resorted to hypocrisy and spoke ugly words. The Prophet (ﷺ), on seeing the degree of distress among the people, began giving them cheerful news, saying:

"By Him in Whose hands is my soul, this distress which you see will soon be gone from you. I am hopeful that I shall soon circumambulate the ancient house (the Ka'bah) in safety, and that Allāh (ﷻ) will hand-over to me the keys of the Ka'bah. And Allāh (ﷻ) will surely destroy Khosrau and Caesar, and we shall spend their treasures in the way of Allāh (ﷻ).[70]

❑ The burden of resistance fell upon those who possessed unshakeable faith. They had to suppress the signs of distress which were becoming more and more visible in those with little patience, and they had to spread a wave of courage and bravery which could overcome or prevent the tendencies of cowardice and hesitation which were surfacing here and there. People's natures react differently in times of serious crises. Among them are the fragile, which are quickly absorbed into the stream as the waters carry away the scum and mire; and among them are the solid, against which the storm throws itself, breaking its force upon it and turning itself into foam. Yes among people are those who attack the hardships before they are attacked by them. As the poet says: "I kept back In order to preserve life, but I did not find for myself any life such as if I were to advance."

❑ And among them are those who turn on their heels when fear touches them: the more they are prodded by the desire for life the more they resort to flight. The Qur'ān reproached this class of people for their attitude in the Battle of the Ditch. It says:

﴾Say: Flight will not avail you if you flee from death or killing, and then you dwell in comfort for only a little while. Say: Who is he who can preserve you from Allāh if He intends harm for you, or intends mercy for you. They will find that they have no friend nor helper other than Allāh.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 16-17)

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[70] I have not yet found it.

❑ When the Quraish attempted to cross the ditch, when they attempted to occupy the Prophet's (ﷺ) house, and when their cavalry were looking for a weak place to invade the heart of Madīnah, it was those steadfast believers who quickly responded to the call of sacrifice, coming from every quarter so that the enemy might be convinced that there were horrors in the way of achieving their goal.

❑ Ibn Isḥāq narrated that 'Ā'ishah, the mother of the believers, was in the fortress of the Banū Hārithah on the Day of the Ditch. It was one of the most impregnable fortresses in Madīnah, and the mother of Sa'd

Ibn Mu'ādh was there with her. 'Ā'ishah said: "That was before the veil was prescribed for us."

Sa'd passed by, wearing a coat of mail so short that his whole arm protruded through it. He was carrying a lance in his hand as he hurried along, saying: "Hamal[71] stayed a while looking at the confusion. No fear of death when one's turn arrives!"

❑ His mother then said to him: "Hurry, my son, you are way behind, by Allāh (ﷻ)!"

❑ 'Ā'ishah said: "I told her: 'By Allāh (ﷻ), I wish Sa'd's armour were longer.' I feared for him exactly where the arrow struck him. Sa'd was hit by an arrow which cut the medial vein of his arm."

❑ It appears that Sa'd's wound was severe, for he was not a man to fear death. He was deeply desirous of pursuing the *jihād* until Islām prevailed and its enemy defeated. He therefore supplicated to Allāh (ﷻ), saying:

"O Allāh (ﷻ), if You have reserved any more of the war with the Quraish, then preserve me for it, for there are no other people on whom I should love to wage *jihād* more than those who injured Your messenger, deceived him and expelled him. If You have ended the war between us and them, then let it be martyrdom for me. However, do not cause me to die until You have satisfied my desire as regards the Banū Quraydhah."

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[71] He meant Ḥamal ibn Sa'danah al-Kalbi, as pointed out in *Al Raud al-Unuf*. Some say *Jamal*, which is wrong.

❑ Sa'd's supplication expresses the extent to which the Muslims had been enraged by the perfidy of the Jews and their breach of the existing treaty. The attitude of the Children of Isreal towards the treaties which they have signed in the past and the present makes us conclude that these people will never eradicate their meanness, and that they observe the agreements only so long as they are in accordance with their desires, gains and lusts. However, if they obstruct their illicit desires, they will be cast aside like a date stone. If the donkey was to give up its braying, or the viper its venom, the Jews would be able to give up their breaking of treaties. The Qur'ān has drawn our attention to this despicable trait in the Children of Israel and has shown us that it has made them into beasts, not humans.

﴾Indeed! The worst of beasts in Allāh's sight are the ungrateful who will not believe: Those of them with whom you made a treaty, and then at every opportunity they break their treaty, and they do not keep their duty [to Allāh].﴿ (Qur'ān 8: 55-56)

❑ Sa'd was taken to a tent in the Masjid, where a skilled Muslim woman nursed him. The Muslim came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him if he had anything to say, for they were scared.
He replied in the affirmative and said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), cover our faults and allay our fears." [72]

Also, 'Abdullāh ibn Awfa narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) made an invocation on the allies by saying:

"O Allāh (ﷻ), Who revealed the Book and is quick of reckoning, defeat the allies. O Allāh (ﷻ), defeat them and help us to overcome them.[73]

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) does not accept the supplication of those who are lazy and negligent. He listens to nothing more intensely than the cry of those who exert themselves to bless them in their efforts, or those who are patient to reward them in the end. The

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[72] A good Ḥadīth, narrated by Aḥmad and Ibn Abi Ḥātim on the authority of Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī.

[73] A sound Ḥadīth, narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

Muslims exhausted their energies in defending their faith and their city until there was nothing left for them to do that was within human capacity. All that remained was that Providence should intervene to crush the haughtiness of the oppressor and relieve the burden of the oppressed. Thus the battle developed in such a manner that the people could not fathom its reality.

﴾No one knows the hosts of your Lord save Him. This is nothing else than a reminder to mortals.﴿ (Qur'ān 74: 31)

❑ The bedouin Arabs who had pitched their tents around Madīnah were becoming frustrated with this waiting. They had not come to exhaust their provisions in front of an impenetrable ditch and mountains over which the indomitable Muslims allowed no-one to pass. What was more, the air became filled with dust, and a violent wind began to howl, almost carrying away the tents scattered on the plain.

❑ The relationship between these confederates did not encourage lasting confidence in one another. The Ghaṭafān and the tribes of Najd came with the allurement of plunder and pillage. They would have accepted to return from where they came when they were offered a portion of the fruit harvest of Madīnah, except that the Muslims would not tolerate giving them any of it as a show of fear.

❑ And what did the Quraydhah do? They broke their pact, and held back from attacking with the expectation that the Arabs would do so! A Jew came out and scouted around one of the fortresses of the Muslims. Ṣafiyah bint 'Abdul Muṭṭalib came down and killed him. And no wonder, for she was the sister of Ḥamzah! Abū Sufyān turned to the right and the left, seeking help for what he wanted to do, but he could find no helpers, and this left him and the ranks of the Quraish with him despondent.

❑ The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was aware of this hidden breach in the ranks of the confederates, and he did his utmost to widen it and exploit it for his own ends. Thus when Na'im ibn Mas'ūd came to him with the acceptance of Islām, he advised

him to keep his conversion a secret, and sent him back to the idolaters to cause disorder among them. He said to him: "You are just one man, but you can try on our behalf to make them to desert one another, for war is deception."

❑ Na'īm set off for the Quraydhah, to whom he had been an intimate friend in *jahilīyah*. He said: "Banū Quraydhah, you know how much I love you and the special relationship between me and you."

❑ They said: "You are right. We have no grievance against you." So he continued: "The Quraish and the Ghaṭafān are not like you. This is your territory. In it are your properties, children and wives. You cannot move from it to another place. The Quraish and the Ghaṭafān have come to fight Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions, and you have supported them against him. However, their territory, properties and women are elsewhere, so they are not like you. If they see any opportunity they will seize it, but if not, they will return to their homes and leave you and that man in your territory. You have no power to deal with him if you have to confront him alone. So do not fight with these people unless you take some of their nobles into your custody as a guarantee that they will fight Muhammad (ﷺ) with you until you are victorious."

❑ They said: "You have indeed given us sound advice."

❑ Then he left, and went to the Quraish and said to Abū Sufyān and those with him. "You know how much I love you and my difference with Muhammad (ﷺ). Something has reached my hearing which I thought it best to inform you of to put you on your guard, so keep it a secret for me," They agreed, and he continued: "You should know that the Jews have repented of the way they behaved towards Muhammad (ﷺ), and they have sent to him, saying that they have repented of what they have done and whether it would please him if they handed over him some of the nobles of the two tribes, the Quraish and the Ghaṭafān, so that he might kill them. He has sent to them, saying that he has agreed. So if the Jews send to you, asking for some

of your men as a surety, do not give them a single man."

❑ Then he went to the Ghaṭafān and said to them: "O people of Ghaṭafān, you are my clan and the most beloved of people to me and I do not think you have any grievances against me."

❑ They replied: "You are right. We have no grievances against you."

❑ He continued: "Well, keep what I shall say a secret." When they agreed to do so, he told them exactly what he told the Quraish and gave them the same warning.

❑ On Friday night of *Shawwāl* in the fifth year, Allāh (ﷻ) arranged it so for His Prophet (ﷺ) that Abū Sufyān and the leaders of the Ghaṭafān should send a delegation to the Banū Quraydhah, headed by 'Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl.

The delegation said: "We are not in our homes, Our cattle and sheep are being consumed. So in the morning come out for battle. Let us fight Muhammad (ﷺ) until we settle the score between him and us."

❑ The Jews replied: "Today is Saturday, a day on which we do no work. In the past some of us had violated this day and they were afflicted by what is not unknown to you. Besides, we shall not fight Muhammad (ﷺ) with you until you give us a surety of your men, who will be in our hands as a guarantee while we fight Muhammad (ﷺ). We are afraid that if the war becomes too critical for you, you will retreat to your country and leave us with that man on our hands, and we should have no power to resist him."

❑ When the delegation returned with this message from the Banū Quraydhah, the Quraish and the Ghaṭafān said that, it was true what Na'im had told them. They sent back to the Banū Quraydhah, saying that they would not give them a single man, and that if they wanted war they should go out and fight. Upon hearing this, the Jews said to one another that it was true what Na'im had told them. The people had no urge to fight; if they saw the opportunity they would seize it, otherwise they would

retreat to their country.[74]

❑ In this way the Muslims were successful in undoing the knots of alliance among the confederates who had gathered against them. Not three weeks had passed since the siege had been laid before frustration and suspicion crept into the ranks of the attackers, while on the other hand the defending front remained as strong as ever without a breach.

❑ One wintry night, when icy gusts of wind were freezing faces and skins and keeping men rigid in their places in the hope of warmth and to escape from the cold descending on the rocks and sand, the enemy began planning a decisive move to end this unsuccessful battle. It was as though the roar of the violent wind were a whip which spurred on the attackers not to delay in extricating themselves from this situation. The Prophet (ﷺ) looked from behind the walls of Madīnah and around him were his Companions fixed in their places, staring at the horizon with caution, their hopes pinned on the Unseen, even though the cold and heavy darkness was spreading over every thing in the wide expanse of the desert.

❑ Hudhayfah ibn al Yamān narrated:

"On the night of the Confederates we were seated in rows; Abū Sufyān and those with him were above us, and the Quraydhah, whom we feared for our children, below us. There was never a night of such intense darkness or violent wind as that night. There were sounds like thunderbolts in the wind and the darkness was so intense that none of us could see his finger. I had no protection from the enemy or the cold except a shawl of my wife which reached only to my knees.

The Prophet (ﷺ) came to me while I was seated crosslegged on the ground and asked who I was. I replied that I was Hudhayfah, and he asked "Hudhayfah?" I recoiled in my

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[74] This story is mentioned without a chain by Ibn Isḥāq, and from him by Ibn Hishām. However, the Prophet's (ﷺ) statement "War is deception" is authentic, for it is narrated by Muslim and Bukhārī.

position, hating to stand up, while saying "Yes, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). He then commissioned me with what he wanted, saying; "There is something going on among the enemy; bring me the news of it."

I went out, more scared and more cold than all the mankind. He made a supplication for me and I advanced to my task as if I were walking in a bath.

This was the heat of faith and the zeal of obedience which made the man overcome the severity of the weather with his kindled emotion. He continued:

"As I turned to go, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised me not to cause any incident among the enemy until I returned to him. As I approached the enemy camp I saw the light of a fire and dark, huge man, stretching out his hands to the fire to warm them, then he nabbed his waist. He was saying that they should depart. I had not known Abū Sufyān before that. I put an arrow in my bow with the intention of shooting him, but then I remembered the Prophet's (ﷺ) advice and I controlled myself. If I had shot him I should have hit him. I noticed the violent wind in every corner of the camp. Not a pot nor a fire nor a tent was left in place.

Then Abū Sufyān said: "O Assembly of Quraish, you are not at home, your cattle and sheep have died and the Banū Quraydhah have broken their promise to you and we have heard things of them which we dislike. Also, the violent winds have overturned our pots, put our fires and uprooted our tents. So let us be on our way, for I am ready to depart." Then he went to his mount, which was tied, sat on it and slapped it, whereupon it reared upon three legs. By Allāh (ﷻ), its reins were untied only when it was standing."[75]

❑ Hudhayfah returned to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him all that he saw. When day broke, the outskirts of Madīnah were clear. The confederates had gone and the siege had been lifted. Peace

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[75] This story is authentic. Its sequence here is made up of three narrations, the first Al-Ḥākim and Al Bayhaqui, the second from Ibn Ḥishām in his *Sīrah*, and the third from Muslim.

returned and faith came out of the trial successful!

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) shouted:

"There is no god but Allāh (ﷻ) alone,
He (ﷻ) fulfilled His promise,
And helped His servant,
And elevated His army,
And defeated the allies all by Himself."[76]

❑ Tranquillity returned to the people's hearts. The frustration of the confederates became apparent after they had come from all corners to crush Madīnah, and the mettle of the Muslims became apparent in the face of unnerving crises. For this reason, the Prophet (ﷺ), after this glorious result, declared: "Now we shall fight them and they will not fight us."[77]

With the Quraydhah

The hordes of confederates who had surrounded Madīnah dispersed into the desert, taking nothing with them but failure and frustration, and the Jews of the Quraydhah alone remained. They remained, and with them their treachery which laid bare their intentions. Overnight they became like the criminal whose guilt has been proved and who awaits with a gloomy face the judicial sentence to be imposed on them.

❑ The feeling of anger in the hearts of the Muslims towards those Jews had reached its peak. It was they who had summoned the Arabs to Madina so as to root out the Muslims from it. The wounds of the Muslims caused by the expulsion from their homes, persecution of them for their beliefs and attacks on their properties and lives were not yet healed, and in fact would never heal. So how could these treacherous Jews draw up by themselves a plan to destroy Islām and its sons in this despicable manner? Furthermore, how could the Banū Quraydhah in particular, who had seen only piety and faithfulness on the part of Muhammad

[76] Narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say: This is general without any mention of the Ditch.

[77] An authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī.

(ﷺ), join the enemies of Islām to participate with them in the murder and looting of the Muslims? And here was Ḥuyayy ibn Akhtab who had entered their fortresses, the head of the gang who had travelled through Makkah and Najd, urging the confederates to wage war on Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and declaring that paganism was better than monotheism.

❑ Thus no sooner did the Muslims ascertain that the confederates had left Madīnah than the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered a messenger to proclaim to the people:

"Whoever is attentive and obedient should not pray the '*Aṣr*' prayer until he has reached the homes of the Banū Quraydhah."[78] The announcement to fight on this morning brilliant with victory and success rang clearly in the ears of Muslims, who were overwhelmed with the awareness of the support of Allāh (ﷻ) and His angels. Where are they today compared with what they were in the recent past? They are indebted to Providence alone for their lives and honour. As for their enemies, it was the powers of the universe, by Allāh's leave, which caused their assembly to be dispersed and their spirits to be dampened.

No wonder, therefore, that the Prophet (ﷺ) should say to the believers, speaking from the faithful spirit [Angel Jibrīl (ﷺ)]:

"The angels have not yet put down their arms... Allāh (ﷻ) orders you, Muhammad (ﷺ), to march to the Banū Quraydhah, for I am heading towards them in order to crush them."[79]

The Prophet (ﷺ) passed on the order and urged the Muslims to be quick in executing it. Al Bayhaqi narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his Companions: "I adjure you not to offer '*Aṣr* prayers until you reach the Banū Quraydhah."

❑ However, the sun had set before they arrived. So a group of Muslims prayed, saying that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not mean that

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[78] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq. Bukhārī and Muslim narrated it without "Whoever ... obedient."

[79] From the Ḥadīth mentioned in the previous footnote. Jibrīl's (ﷺ) ordering of the Prophet (ﷺ) to march is established in Bukhārī and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

they should not pray, whereas another group said that they would obey the Prophet's (ﷺ) instructions and there was no sin on them. Thus the first prayed out of faith and obedience, whereas the second abstained out of faith and obedience and the Prophet (ﷺ) did not reproach either of the two.[80] This represents the respect which Islām shows for the differences of opinion as long as they are based on pure, sound reasoning. People are basically of two kinds: those who accept a literal interpretation of the text without delving more deeply, and those who investigate their wisdom and aim, and then act in accordance with this understanding even though it may contradict the obvious. The faith and obedience of both groups attest for them whether they hit the mark or not.

❑ There are some scholars who invalidate the specified time for prayers on account of war, and this is the opinion of Bukhārī and others. This in my understanding is nearer to the truth since the systematic arrangement of the duties encumbent upon all servants of Allāh (ﷻ) is one of the most important roles of Muslims in their lives. In fact they cannot understand religion in its true sense unless they understand this desired arrangement. Islām consists of various teachings and actions, among which are the compulsory and the optional, and we must know that Allāh (ﷻ) will not accept an optional deed unless the compulsory ones are completed. Thus people who indulge in plentiful deeds of a voluntary nature while neglecting the compulsory deeds are misguided.

❑ The prescribed compulsory acts are needed for the safeguarding of one's faith just as some specific instructions are needed for the safeguarding of one's health. The body cannot be healthy when fed with starch or protein alone. It is in need of a

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[80] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Dalā'il al Nubūwah* on the authority of 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ka'b (ﷺ) as well as 'Ā'ishah. Al Ḥākim also narrated it from her and ascertained that its chain was of the standard of Bukhārī and Muslim.

varied diet, otherwise it will be prone to various wasting or fatal diseases. In the same way faith cannot exist in the being of one individual or the ranks of a group unless they fulfil a number of different compulsory acts, which will protect its existence and ensure its growth and well-being. Muslims must divide their time and regulate themselves according to these compulsory acts so that one duty does not make them neglect another duty, or to put it more simply, one optional act should not keep them from performing a compulsory one. On this occasion the Prophet (ﷺ) saw as their primary obligation that they should take the Banū Quraydhah unaware before they had the time to prepare themselves or fortify their homes, and so nothing should keep the Muslims from this task, even if it happened to be prayer.

❑ In the light of this prophetic guidance you can judge the behaviour of the Muslims today. The teacher who neglects to teach his pupils, the merchant who neglects to invest his wealth and the employer who neglects to invest his wealth and the employee who neglects his work will never be excused by Allāh (ﷻ) for their negligence of these essential duties, even though they may be prevented from them by the performance of a hundred *rak'at*, or the recitation of a thousand *āyāt*, or the counting of the beautiful names of Allāh (ﷻ) seventy thousand times, as some of the ignorant Sufis do. This is because it is neglect of the prescribed compulsory acts in favour of other optional acts which were not prescribed. It is a stagnation of this *Ummah*, which cannot rise to its height again unless it exerts itself to combat its ignorance, poverty and chaos. Public *jihād* is a compulsory action whose importance nothing can lessen and which no act of worship can displace in its time, as you have seen.

❑ It was 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) who carried the Muslim standard to the forts of the Quraydhah. The Muslims vied with one another to arrive there and gather around the forts. Even when the army had approached quite close, the Jews were still as wayward as ever, for they looked at the Muslims and abused the Prophet (ﷺ) and his wives most vilely.

'Alī (ﷺ) thought it best to divert the Prophet (ﷺ) from those fools so he intercepted him as he was approaching and said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), you should not go near those villains."

❑ "Why?" replied the Prophet (ﷺ), "I think you have heard some insults from them aimed at me. 'Alī (ﷺ) said yes, and the Prophet (ﷺ) asserted: "If they see me they will not say such things." On approaching them, he said: "O brethren of the apes, has Allāh (ﷺ) disgraced you and sent down his curse upon you?"[81]

❑ "O Abū Qāsim," they replied, "you are not a foolish man."

❑ These are the character traits of some of the Jews. They insult other when they are safe, they kill when they are capable, and they describe people as the perfect example when they are afraid and for no other reason than their personal gain. As for treaties, they are the last things in life which they will support. However, their foolhardiness was of no avail, for the Muslims surrounded them closely and they felt certain that there was no other way out but surrender, and their hearts were filled with despair and fear.

❑ Ka'b (ﷺ) chief of the Banū Quraydhah, said: "Fellow Jews, you see what has befallen you, and I shall give you three options, so take whichever of them you like." When they asked what they were, he continued: "We should follow this man and believe in him for, by Allāh (ﷺ), it is clear to you that he is a Prophet (ﷺ) sent by Allāh (ﷺ) and that he is the one whom you find in your Scripture. In this way you will safeguard your lives, your properties, your children and your womenfolk."

❑ They said: "We shall never abandon the law of the Torah and we shall never exchange it for any other."

❑ He said: "If you reject this, then come, let us kill our children and women. Then let us go out to meet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions face to face with our swords, not leaving behind us any property, so that Allāh (ﷺ) may decide between us and

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[81] A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Isḥāq on the authority of Al Zuhrī as *Mursal*. Ibn Hishām took it from him. It is also narrated by Al-Ḥākim on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) although its chain is weak.

them. If we die, we die without leaving behind any progeny to be afraid for, and if we are victorious then, by my life, we shall find other women and children."

❑ They said, "Shall we kill these poor wretches? What good is left in life after them?"

❑ He said: "If you reject this, then tonight is Saturday night and perhaps Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions are feeling safe at this time. Let us attack them unawares."

❑ They replied: "Should we spoil our Sabbath for ourselves and commit in it what those before us never committed?

❑ He said: "Not one of you has ever been resolute for one night since your mothers gave birth to you."

❑ The Banū Quraydhah attempted to woo a settlement such as the one which had been concluded with their brothers, the Banū al Naḍīr. However, the Muslims refused everything but their unconditional surrender. The crime which they had committed was a clear and despicable treachery, and the Muslims were so angered by it that there remained no more room for leniency. If absolute justice was allowed to be meted out, then things would settle in their rightful place.

❑ The Jews surrounded by the Muslims, asked to speak with Abū Lubābah ibn 'Abdul Mundhir. They sought his advice as to whether they should submit to Muhammad's (ﷺ) decree and he replied positively, pointing to his neck as if to say that it would definitely be slaughter. Then he immediately realized that he had betrayed the Prophet (ﷺ) by so doing, and in a confused state he hurried to the Prophet's (ﷺ) mosque in Madīnah, where he tied himself to one of its columns, swearing that he would not be loosed from it unless Allāh (ﷻ) pardoned him. Allāh (ﷻ) did accept his repentance, and some days later the following āyah was revealed about him:

﴿And [there are] others who have acknowledged their faults. They mixed a righteous action with another that was bad. It may be that Allah will relent toward them. Indeed, Allah is Relenting, Merciful.﴾ (Qur'ān 9: 102)

❑ The siege continued for twenty-five days, during which the Muslims allowed the Jews who had refused to betray the Prophet (ﷺ) during the Battle of the Ditch to leave and go wherever they wished as a reward for their faithfulness. Thereafter they resolved to attack the closed fortresses and enter them by force.

'Alī (ﷺ) cried: "O battalion of faith, by Allāh (ﷻ) I shall either taste what Ḥamzah tasted or I shall open up their forts." With him was Al Zubayr ibn-al 'Awwām.

❑ However, the Quraydhah said: "O Muhammad (ﷺ), we shall accept the decree of Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh."

Thus they came out of their forts and were taken to a prison camp, where Sa'd was brought to make the final decision about those who had been his allies. Sa'd was the chief of the Aus, who were the allies of the Banū Quraydhah in *jahilīah*, and the Jews expected this relationship to benefit them. The Aus themselves expected their chief to be lenient with their old friends. Thus they pleaded with him to be lenient with their allies as he was being brought from the tent in which he was convalescing after his injury in the Battle of the Ditch.

❑ However, Sa'd (ﷺ) did not forget, amid the cries of hope directed towards him, that Islām and its sons, that Madīnah, its fruits, its crops, its progeny and its sanctuaries were rescued from the vehemence of the attacking forces only by a miracle of Providence. It was the Banū Quraydhah and those whom they harboured who had been the instigators and unholy allies in this war which had been declared to crush true monotheism and its upholders. Sa'd (ﷺ) did not forget that the Quraydhah had broken their treaty and greeted him with a shower of abuse when he went to plead with them to remain faithful. Did he not say to them, "I fear for you what happened to the Banū al Naḍīr or worse than it? Despite this, their reply was "Eat your father's…!"

❑ Thus Sa'd (ﷺ) did not hesitate to say to his people after their insistent pleading: "The time has come now that Sa'd (ﷺ) should be afraid of no-one's blame for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ)."

Sa'd (ﷺ) decreed that the men should be killed, their women and children taken captive and their properties distributed. The Prophet (ﷺ) endorsed this resolute decree, saying to Sa'd (ﷺ): "You have decreed for them decreed by Allāh (ﷻ) from above the seven heavens."[82]

❑ Trenches were dug in the market square of Madīnah to execute this decree, and the Jewish fighters were brought to them in groups, one after the other, to pay the price for their treachery.

The Jews who were taken away to their deaths asked their chief, Ka'b (ﷺ):" What do you think he is doing to us?"

❑ He replied: " Do you ever have any sense? Can you not see that the announcer never stops, and that whichever of you leaves to go with him never returns? By God, it is to be killed."

❑ Yes, it was a killing. Nevertheless, the consequences of such a decree fell only on those who exposed themselves to it by their foul actions, and by their foul intentions which did not have the opportunity to materialize. And if they had been realized it would have meant the killing of thousands of Muslims under the feet of the confederates who sprang from all corners and were instigated and supported by these Jews.

❑ Perhaps one of the causes for the catastrophe which overtook the Banū Quraydhah was the adventures of a small band of men who were seeking the leadership. If Ḥuyayy ibn Akhṭab and his peers had chosen to live in peace with Islām and were content with the booty offered them, neither they nor their people would have been subjected to this momentous retaliation. However, nations pay a high price with their blood for the mistakes of their leaders. In the twentieth century the Russians, the Germans and other nations paid dearly for the egotism of their deluded politicians. For this reason the Qur'ān deplores the greed and injustice of such leaders, for which others have borne the cost:

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[82] A sound Hadīth narrated by Ibn Isḥāq from whom Ibn Hishām took it on the authority of Alqamah ibn Waqqās as *mursal*. However. Bukhārī and Muslim also narrated it from Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī without the phrase "from above the seven heavens." Thus this portion is weak.

﴾Have you not seen those who gave the grace of Allāh in exchange for thanklessness and led their people down to the Abode of Loss. [Even to] Hell? Thus they are exposed. A hapless end!﴿
(Qur'ān 14: 28-29)

❑ Ḥuyayy was brought to face his end, and Ḥuyayy, as you know was the germ of these troubles. He looked at the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "By God, I do not blame myself for my hostility towards you. Nevertheless, whoever deserts God deserts him. Then he turned to the people and said: "O people, I have nothing against the order of God. He has decreed slaughter for the Children of Israel." Then he sat down and was beheaded. About this a poet says:

By your life, Ibn Akhtab did not blame himself,
But whoever deserts Allāh (ﷻ) is deserted.
He fought until he reached his limit,
And stirred up trouble.
And every troublemaker seeks glory.

It is true that there were brave men among the Quraish and the Jews who faced death unflinchingly. False principles and baseless ideologies will never cease to have followers who defend them with their lives and riches. Nevertheless, this does not make falsehood true or tyranny just.

❑ The attitude of the Jews to Islām yesterday was the same as their attitude to the Muslims today. Thousands of our brothers and sisters have been slaughtered in silence by the Jews who have occupied Palestine. The strange thing is that the Jews have left alone those who erected slaughter-houses for them in Europe and are cowardly to confront them. However, they oppress the Muslims who did not do them injustice for twelve centuries and tyrannize them in this shameful manner up to this day in Palestine, witnessed, encouraged and supported by the Western states.

❑ About the defeat of the confederates and the punishment of the Quraydhah, Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following āyāt:

﴾And Allāh repulsed the disbelievers in their wrath; they gained no good. Allāh averted their attack from the believers. Allāh is Strong,

Mighty. And He brought those of the people of the Scripture who supported them down from their strongholds, and cast panic into their hearts. Some you killed and some you took captive. And He caused you to inherit their land, their houses, their wealth, and land you have not trodden. Allāh is Able to do all things.》
(Qur'ān 33: 25-27)

❑ In this battle with the idolaters first and the Jews after, the Muslims lost a small number of men including Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh. Allāh (ﷻ) answered his prayer and he died a martyr from the injuries he had received. In the Battle of the Ditch after Allāh (ﷻ) satisfied his desire concerning the Jews of the Quraydhah, and after, the Quraish's attack on Madīnah proved a failure and they returned home to be thenceforth under attack rather than the attackers.

❑ The enmity between the Muslims and the Jews did not end with the defeat of the Quraydhah, for some of those who had instigated the confederates against Islām fled to Khaybar with its fortresses to seek the assistance of their brothers there. One of them was Abū Rāfi' ibn Ḥuyayy's partner when he went round the tribes, inciting them to attack Madīnah. Mischief is ever expected from the Jews as long as they have the power to do so. The prophetic saying has vividly expressed how much hatred the Jews have for Islām. He said: "If ever a Jew is alone with a Muslim, he will attempt to kill him."[83]

❑ We do not know of any reason for this instinctive hatred, except that they have deviated from the straight path. It is the right of the Muslims to be wary of it and not let any remains of it exist and grow with time. Thus five men from the Kharzraj tribe were sent to Khaybar to finish off Abū Rāfi' and fill the hearts of his associates with fear. The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed 'Abdullāh ibn 'Atik as their commander and forbade them from killing a child or a woman.[84]

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[83] A weak Ḥadīth narrated by Al Khālid in 'The History of Baghdad'. He said it was a very strange Ḥadīth.

[84] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Al Bara ibn Azib.

❑ The five adventurers entered Khaybar and reached the home of Ibn Abi al Haqīq in the evening. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Ātik told his companions to wait while he went forward to check. As he was seeking way to enter the fort he encountered some servants with a light, looking for a lost donkey. He was afraid that he would be recognized, so he covered his head and sat down as if he was easing his bowels. After they had found their donkey the gatekeeper announced that he was locking the gates so those who wished to enter should do so at once. 'Abdullāh entered and hid in the place where the animals were tethered near the gate of the fortress.

❑ Abū Rāfi' and his associates had supper and engaged in conversation for a while. Then they got up and left him for their homes. The voices died away and everything became still. 'Abdullāh came out, having seen where the keys to the fortress were kept, and he took them out and opened the gate so that he could leave easily if the people saw him. He next went to their rooms and locked their doors from outside. Then he climbed the stairs to where Abū Rāfi' usually slept. The house was dark: all its lamps were extinguished. Not knowing where the man was, 'Abdullāh called him by name: Abū Rāfi' replied: "Who is it?" 'Abdullāh headed for the voice and struck him, but the blow was ineffective and he shouted.

❑ 'Abdullāh came up as if to help him, and asked "What is the matter, Abū Rāfi? Changing his voice.

❑ Abū Rāfi' replied: "Curse be on your mother! Someone entered and struck me with a sword."

❑ 'Abdullāh struck him a second time and he shouted, waking up his family. He fell to the floor, where 'Abdullāh finished him off and then hurriedly left the room. He came to the stairs and was going to descend but slipped and twisted his leg. He tied it up and came limping back to his companions. They returned to Madīnah and gave the glad news that they had removed yet another insurmountable obstacle in the way of the *da'wah*.

❑ Unbelief was weakened under these heavy blows, and the foundations of Islām were strengthened and its state became

secure. The fifth year of the Hijrah had hardly ended before the Muslims became a power to reckon with. The Quraish and their allies were convinced that it was impossible to force them to return to the worship of idols, while the Jews had to admit that their malicious opposition to the new faith and its final message had only led them into a complicated muddle.

❑ After the Battle of the Ditch this year up to the latter part of the sixth year, that is, up to the 'Umrah of Ḥudaybiyah, there were no other major incidents. The Hudhayl attempted to attack Madīnah but their leader, Khālid ibn Sufyān, was killed, so they refrained. Then some bedouin thieves, led by 'Uyaynah ibn Ḥisn in the company of some horsemen from the Ghaṭafān, raided Madīnah and went away with its camels. However, Salāmah ibn al Akwa' alerted the people of Madīnah and set off alone in pursuit of the raiders, firing arrows at them in an attempt to retrieve the camels. Soon the Muslims horsemen were able to catch up with him, and upon seeing them the idolaters retreated, although not until some of them were killed and the stolen goods were retrieved. Bukhārī claims that this took place after Ḥudaybiyah, not before, and perhaps this is more authentic.

❑ During this period the Prophet (ﷺ) married Umm Ḥabībah, daughter of Abū Sufyān, who had migrated to Abyssinia with her husband. He, however, became a Christian and died there, and so she was left alone. The Prophet (ﷺ) thought that he should honour this lady, who had forsaken her father, at that time the leader of Makkah, and chosen to migrate for Allāh's cause and remain faithful to Him, by marrying her. Thus he sent his offer to the Negus and made him his agent in this contract.

❑ He also married Zaynab bint Jaḥsh. We shall discuss the details of this marriage in a forthcoming chapter on polygamy and the Prophet's (ﷺ) wives in particular.

❑ It is said also that 'Amr ibn al 'As became inclined to Islām during this period. He was impressed by the victory gained by Muhammad (ﷺ), and he said to some of his associates: "Surely I can see Muhammad's (ﷺ) affair taking on greater proportions."

❑ Then he advised them to go to Abyssinia where they could watch the results of the struggle between the Muslims and their people. When he went to Abyssinia and saw how the Negus respected the Prophet (ﷺ) and those who joined his cause, he became inclined to enter into Islām. Nevertheless, he hid his feelings until the Conquest to Makkah was imminent. He met Khālid ibn al Walid, who had decided to accept Islām and migrated to Madīnah, and he asked him where he was going.

❑ Khālid replied: "By Allāh (ﷻ), the path is clear. Surely the man is a Prophet! I am going to accept Islām, by Allāh (ﷻ), for, how long (can we continue otherwise)? 'Amr was pleased to find a companion such as Khālid, so he too disclosed his mind to him, and the two men made their way to Yathrib as Muslims and *muhajirīn*. The story of their acceptance of Islām was just before the Conquest of Makkah, as I have already said, because Khālid was a leader of the army of the Quraish in the 'Umrah of Ḥudaybiyah, when they were hindering the Muslims from visiting the ancient House.

Chapter Seven

A new phase

The '*Umrah* of Ḥudaybiyah

The idea of visiting the Sacred Mosque which occurred to the Muslims came at the start of an exceptional phase in the history of their *da'wah*. Here they were expressing aloud their determination to enter Makkah, whereas only yesterday they had been expelled from it and attacked in the place where they had settled. The war between them and the Quraish was not yet over, for there was no decisive outcome in favour of either side. So how could they intend to make the pilgrimage (*'Umrah*) in these circumstances?

❑ The answer to this question was that the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to use this opportunity to assert the right of the Muslims to perform their acts of worship, and to make the idolaters understand that the Sacred Mosque was not the property of any tribe who could monopolize it and prevent others from making their pilgrimage to it. It was the legacy of the Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (عليه السلام), and the pilgrimage to it was incumbent on all those reached by the proclamation made centuries ago by the father of the prophets:

﴾And [remember] when We prepared for Abraham the place of the [holy] House, saying: make not anything as a partner to Me, and purify My house for those who make the round [thereof], those who stand, and those who bow and make prostration. And proclaim mankind the pilgrimage: they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine.﴿ (Qur'ān 22: 26-27)

❑ Thus it was not permissible for the people of Makkah to prevent the Muslims from coming to it. If, in the past, they were able to expel them, then, after the fighting that had taken place, they would not again insist on their erring ways.

❑ The preparation of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions for '*Umrah* was in itself a sign of their deep desire for peace, and their desire to forget the old hostilities and start more peaceful and friendly relations. When would this take place? After the Quraish had exhausted their energies in insulting the Muslims, and after their abject failure to do so had become apparent. They had fought steadfastly for a number of years and sacrificed their wealth and lives to destroy Islām. In the end, however, achieved only great losses and severe crises, whereas the Muslims gained a stronger foothold and raised their banner higher than ever. Now they were going to Makkah as humble worshippers, not as revengeful warriors, wishing only to have the same right to make the pilgrimage as others had and from which they should not be prevented.

❑ With this humble and magnaminous intention, the Prophet (ﷺ) summoned the Muslim community and the bedouin who lived around Madīnah. He announced to them that he wanted '*Umrah*, not war, and was taking with him the sacrificial animals which would be slaughtered and fed to the poor of Makkah, the same people who had gathered to exterminate them in the Battle of the Ditch.

❑ Did the unbelievers really understand this intention and assess correctly the status of the person who expressed it? No. They still remained attached, as was to be expected, to their corrupt conscience and evil designs. The bedouin who lived around Madīnah, and the hypocrites who were of the same turn of mind as they, knew that people of Makkah would fight Muhammad (ﷺ), and that if he insisted on making the pilgrimage, as he had announced, the Quraish would not let him until either they killed him or they are perished in the attempt to stop him. It was therefore an 'Umrah fraught with danger in their eyes, and the best thing was to flee from it. Perhaps if Muhammad (ﷺ) attained his objective, it would be easy to make excuses to him when he returned.

﴾Those of the wandering Arabs who were left behind will tell you: Our possessions and our households occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us. They speak with their tongues that which is not in their hearts. Say: Who can help you against Allāh, if He intends you harm or intends you benefit? No, Allāh is always aware of what you do. No: you thought that the messenger and the believers would never return to their own people and that was made fair-seeming in your hearts, and you did think a evil thought, and you were worthless people.﴿ (Qur'ān 48: 11-12)

❑ The confident Muslims left with the Prophet (ﷺ), their number being close to one thousand four hundred. This was in *Dhul Qia'dah* of the sixth year after Hijrah. They travelled and chanted praises to Allāh (ﷻ), and when they reached 'Asafān, which was two stages from Makkah, the news came that the Quraish were on the way to stop them. They were led by Khālid Ibn al Walīd and they had sworn that no Muslim would enter their town.

❑ The ghost of war began to hover in front of their eyes, bent on filling these sacred precincts with blood and bodies. Nevertheless, the Muslims had not come for this purpose, and the Quraish should not force them to resort to it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Shame on the Quraish! War has corrupted them. What good would it do them if they cleared the way between me and the other Arabs. If they kill me, then this is what they wanted. And if Allāh (ﷻ) grants me victory over them, they will enter into Islām in large numbers. And if they do not, they will fight as long as they have strength. So what do the Quraish think? For, by Allāh (ﷻ), I shall not give up fighting for that which Allāh (ﷻ) sent me with until Allāh (ﷻ) causes it to prevail or I die."[1]

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[1] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Isḥāq with a sound chain from Muswar ibn Makhramah and Marwān ibn al Ḥakīm. Aḥmad and Ibn Ḥishām narrated it from him. It is part of a long Ḥadīth on the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah and was narrated at length by Bukhārī and Aḥmad by another chain. Bukhārī and Aḥmad said that this statement was made by the Prophet (ﷺ) after the story of the she-camel, which is to come, when Badīl ibn Waraqāh came to him and he told him that he had not come for war. This is definitely more authentic than the narration of Ibn Isḥāq.

❑ In keeping with the desire to avoid war and purify the intended rites of any suspicion of a challenge, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked if there was any man to lead them along a route other than the one which the Quraish had taken.[2] A man from the tribe of Aslam volunteered, and he took them along a desolate, muddy track which was difficult for the Muslims to negotiate. Then he brought them to a plain at the end of the valley and the Muslims turned towards the right, which led them into Ḥudaybiyah just below Makkah. The Quraish cavalry became aware of this manoeuvre and they quickly backtracked to Makkah in order to stop the Muslims from entering it.

The Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions were continuing along their chosen path, when suddenly his she-camel knelt down and refused to go further.

The people were astonished at her behaviour, and they said, "Qasira has become refractory." However, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "She has not become refractory, and this is not her nature. Instead, she has been kept back by the One Who kept the elephant from Makkah. Should the Quraish invite me today to any plan in which they seek good relations I shall respond to them."

Then he ordered the people to dismount at the spot where the camel had ended her journey.[3]

❑ The Muslims dismounted as they had been ordered, expectantly awaiting the gates of Makkah to be opened up to them, so that they could circumambulate the Ka'bah, perform the Sa'yi and then leave for their homes with satisfaction and profit. They were confident that they would attain their goal. Why should they have any doubts, since they had heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) himself the many assurances that they would enter the Sacred Mosque in peace, having had their hair shaved or cut?

❑ The Quraish, however, were perturbed at this unexpected

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[2] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Isḥāq in the above-mentioned Ḥadīth on Ḥudaybiyah.

[3] A sound Ḥadīth taken from the Ḥadīth on Ḥudaybiyah by Bukhārī and others.

move, and they gave serious thought to stopping them from entering Makkah, whatever the cost. This was because they looked at the affair from a narrow point of view. They saw their status among the Arabs being threatened if the Muslims were to enter their city in this manner after the numerous wars which had taken place. Nevertheless, the Quraish were aware of their precarious position if another war should break out. They would have no justification for it either for themselves or their allies, and it could end disastrously for them. Thus intermediaries were sent to negotiate with Muhammad (ﷺ). Perhaps they would be able to arrive at a settlement which would save them from this muddle.

❑ The first to come to him was Badīl ibn Waraqah along with some men from the tribe of the Khuza'ah. They approached him and asked why he had come. To this he replied that he had not come for war; he had come to the House as a pilgrim who respected its sanctity. They returned to the Quraish and said: "O assembly of the Quraish, you are being hasty with Muhammad (ﷺ). He has not come for war, but as a pilgrim to the House."

❑ The Quraish replied, "Even if he has come without the intention of fighting, by God, he shall not force his way in at all, and the Arabs will not speak of us concerning it at all."

❑ Then they sent Makraz ibn Ḥafs, and he returned with the same news as Badil. After them they sent the chief of the Ahabish, Al-Halis ibn 'Alqamah.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) saw him he said: "Surely he is coming from people who are confused. Send the sacrificial animals out for him to see.[4] When he saw the animals coming towards him from the bank of the wadi, he returned to the Quraish before meeting the Prophet (ﷺ), because of what he saw.

When he told them of this, they said: "Sit down. You are an unintelligent bedouin."

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[4] A sound Ḥadīth from the Ḥadīth on Ḥudaybiyah by Ibn Isḥāq.

❑ Al-Halīs became angry and shouted: "O assembly of the Quraish, by God, it is not for this that we have become your allies and made a contract with you. Should we bar from the House of God one who has come showing respect to it? By Him in Whose hands is my life, either you give way to Muhammad (ﷺ) and what he came for or I shall leave with every-one of the *Ahabish* (mercenaries)."

❑ They replied: "Wait let us be for a while, Ḥalīs, till we decide for ourselves what we want."

❑ Then they sent 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ūd to the Prophet (ﷺ). However, he did not want to return from negotiating with the Muslims only to hear abuse from the Quraish, so he said: "O assembly of the Quraish, I have seen what ill treatment and insults you gave to those whom you sent to Muhammad (ﷺ). You know that you are the father and I am the son. I heard of what happened to you and I gathered those of my people who obey me and came to support you."

❑ They said: "You are right. We have no grievance against you."

❑ He came to the Prophet (ﷺ), sat down in front of him, and then said: " Muhammad (ﷺ), have you gathered crowds of people and then come to your own tribe in order to ruin them? The Quraish have come out with their women and children wearing leopard skins, and pledged to God that you will never enter it in their presence. By God, I can see these people deserting you tomorrow!"

❑ Abū Bakr (ﷺ) was listening behind the Prophet (ﷺ), and when 'Urwah alluded to the Muslims he disdainfully told him: "Suck Al-Lāt's nipples. Shall we desert him?"

❑ 'Urwah asked who was that, and when the Prophet (ﷺ) replied that it was the son of Abū Qahafah, 'Urwah turned to Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and said: By God, if it were not for a favour which I owe you. I should have responded to that. But now we are even."

❑ 'Urwah continued his conversation with the Prophet (ﷺ), and he took hold of the Prophet's (ﷺ) beard as he was talking, as if to warn him of the consequences of what might happen to his people.

However, Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah knocked his hand away every-time he did that and said: "Keep your hand away from the Prophet's (ﷺ) face before we take hold of you!"

❑ 'Urwah said to him: "How rude and crude you are!" Then asked the Prophet (ﷺ) who he was.

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, smiling: "He is your brother's son, Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah."

'Urwah said to Al-Muhgirah: "You wretch! Wasn't it only yesterday that I washed your dirty parts?[5]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) replied to 'Urwah in such a way as to the obstinacy and remove the doubt. He did not wish for war. All he wanted was to visit the House as others visited it, and not meet with any hindrance or opposition. 'Urwah went back speaking highly of the Companions' veneration of the Prophet (ﷺ). He said: "By God, I have not seen a king among his people like Muhammad (ﷺ) among his Companions. I have seen a people who will never surrender him for anything, so make what you will of that.[6]

❑ The men who spoke on behalf of the Quraish in these negotiations had no arguments. In fact, they returned to Makkah more inclined towards being lenient with the Muslims and allowing them to perform their rites. Some of them only kept from insisting on this when they felt that the Quraish were being stubborn and were avoiding the truth which was plain to them. Without deliberation and thought they had decided that the Muslims should not enter the Holy City, so what was to be, was to be done.

❑ The Muslims remained where they were, seeking other solutions to the problem rather than attacking Makkah. Although a group of foolish people attempted to provoke a battle the Muslims remained calm and did not lost their nerve. Ibn 'Abbās

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[5] Before Islām, Al Mughīrah was a cunning murderer. He had killed some people and 'Urwah pacified the situation by befriending him.

[6] All of this was part of the story of Ḥudaybiyah according to Ibn Isḥāq. Bukhārī narrated it in a similar way.

narrated that the Quraish sent some forty to fifty men to encircle the Prophet's (ﷺ) camp and kill any of his companions. However, they were caught and brought before the Prophet (ﷺ). He pardoned them and set them free, although they had pelted the camp with stones and arrows.[7]

❑ On the boorishness of the Quraish and the forbearance of the Muslims, Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following:

﴾When those who disbelieved had set up in their hearts zealotry, the zealotry of the Age of Ignorance, then Allāh sent down His peace of reassurance upon His messenger and upon the believers, and imposed upon them the word of self-restraint, for they were worth of it and meet for it. And Allāh is Aware of all things.﴿ (Qur'ān 48: 26)

❑ Stemming from the peace which had descended on the Muslims was the fact that the messengers of the Quraish were coming and going to and from the Prophet (ﷺ) without being obstructed by anyone, whereas the messengers of the Muslims sent to the Quraish were exposed to death. Khirash ibn Umayyah of the tribe of Khuza'ah would have been killed if the Ahabish had not saved him. He returned after having camel hamstrung. He had been sent by the Prophet (ﷺ) to explain to the people of Makkah the reason for his coming; that he wanted to worship, not to fight. Messengers are not killed. However, the Quraish had lost their senses, and people who lose senses do not care if they commit suicide. The chieftains of Makkah had deviated from the straight path and they could care less about the deadly fate which awaited them. Had the Muslims clashed with them, they would have had no means of resistance and the sanctuaries of Makkah would have been severely affected.

﴾And if those who disbelieve join battle with you, they will take to

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[7] Weak it was narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq and he did not give the name of one of the links. Aḥmad narrated a shorter version from 'Abdullāh ibn Mughaffal with a sound chain, and in it the number of idolaters is said to be 30 youths. The *āyāh* (verse) "And he it is Who has withheld men's hands from you and has withheld your hands from them..." (Qur'ān 49: 24) was revealed concerning them.

flight; and afterwards they will find no protecting friends nor helper. "It is the law of Allāh which has taken its course before. You will not find any change in the Law of Allāh.) (Qur'ān 48: 22-23)

❑ However, the Prophet (ﷺ) was unhappy that matters should proceed in this way, and he saw it best to renew his attempts at convincing the people of Makkah to let him make the pilgrimage and then leave. He summoned 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ)[8] to go to them and speak to them of the reason for the Muslims' coming.

'Umar (ﷺ) said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), there is no one in Makkah from the Banū 'Adi who will protect me if I am attacked. Send 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (ﷺ), for his clan is still in Makkah and he will convey what you want."

❑ 'Uthmān (ﷺ) entered Makkah under the protection of his cousin Abbān ibn Sa'īd ibn al 'Ās. He was able to convey his message fully, and make whomever he met understand the noble truth for which all the Muslims had come. The reaction to him was. "If you wish to circumambulate the Ka'bah, then do so."

❑ However, he said that he would not do so until the Prophet (ﷺ) circumambulated it first. It is worthy of mention here that Makkah was not devoid of believing men and women whose hearts were attached to the Muslims confined outside the town. Islām had spread secretly in many homes whose occupants longed for the day when they would be able to declare their faith and rid themselves of the tyranny of unbelief over them. Apparently 'Uthmān (ﷺ) had contacted these believing people and given them the good news of a near victory, and the Quraish therefore thought that 'Uthmān (ﷺ) had overstepped his limits. They ordered him to be confined and the news spread among the Muslims that he had been killed.

❑ When the news reached the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: "We shall not leave till we fight these people.[9] He called the Muslims to make

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[8] Part of the story as narrated by Ibn Isḥāq.

[9] Weak: narrated by Ibn Isḥāq, and from him Ibn Hishām, from 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Bakr as *mursal*.

a pledge of allegiance with him. He was under a tree whose branches were interwined. His Companions responded immediately, pledging death with him and that they would not flee.

Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh spoke about it after he had lost his sight. He said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said to us on the Day of Ḥudaybiyah: "You are the best of the people on earth.' We were one thousand four hundred, and if I had my sight today I should show you the place of the tree."[10]

❑ It was narrated from Jābir that a slave of Ḥātib came complaining about him to the Prophet (ﷺ), saying: "Surely Ḥātib will enter the fire."

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "You are wrong. He will not enter it; he has witnessed Badr and Ḥudaybiyah."[11] This pledge is called the Pledge of *riḍwan* (Pleasure) with reference to Allāh's (ﷻ) statement about those who took part in it:

﴿Allāh was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and rewarded them with a near victory.﴾ (Qur'ān 48: 18)

❑ The tree has since been cut down and its place forgotten. This is right, for has it remained, a dome would have been built over it and visits would have been paid to it. The common people are quick to attach themselves to material things and remains which draw them away from Allāh (ﷻ). Ṭāriq ibn 'Abdul Rahmān said:

"I was travelling to make the pilgrimage when I passed by some people offering prayers. I asked what was this mosque, and they said it was the tree under which the Prophet (ﷺ) took the Pledge of ridwan. I came to Sa'īd ibn al Musayyab and told him about this. He said that his father told him that he was one of those who took the pledge with the Prophet (ﷺ) under the

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[10] Sound: narrated by Bukhārī.

[11] Sound: narrated by Muslim. "It was narrated" should be dropped as this suggests that it is weak.

tree, but the next year they had forgotten the place and could not find the tree. Sa'īd continued saying: "The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) did not know it, but you know it: You are more knowledgeable!"

❑ As he was taking the pledge from the Muslims, the Prophet (ﷺ) struck one hand upon the other and said: "This is for 'Uthmān (ﷺ)[12] However, 'Uthmān (ﷺ) was not confined for long for the Quraish were afraid to harm him owing to his status among their nobles. They hurriedly sent Suhayl ibn 'Amr to make an agreement with the Prophet (ﷺ). Their sole aim in this agreement was that the Muslims should go home this year, but they may return at any other time if they wished. This would preserve the status of the Quraish among the Arabs!"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) received the negotiator from the Quraish with the ardent desire for peace even though he was capable of settling matters with the sword to which his enemies had chosen to resort ever since they had expelled him from his home. Suhayl spoke long and offered the conditions within the framework of which the agreement should take place. The Prophet (ﷺ) accepted them, and all that remained was for them to be written down in a document and signed by both sides.

❑ There was a general astonishment in the Muslim camp at the way in which the Prophet (ﷺ) treated his friends and his enemies. As regards the latter he went to extremes to be gentle with them, although it was more fitting that he should be harsh with them. As for his friends, he did not, contrary to his usual dealings with them, consult them at all about the suggested treaty, although in all past affairs of war and peace he would refer to them and even accept their opinion despite his objections. Today, however he took on the job alone and accepted what they disliked without any pressing need.

❑ Elsewhere[13] we have explained the Prophet's stand on the

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[12] Sound: narrated by Bukhārī.

[13] In our book Islām and Political oppression.

'Umrah of Ḥudaybiyah in particular and shown that the affair was not left to be determined by the usual opinion: inspiration from above was the determining factor. Allāh (ﷻ), who prevented the camel from moving forward, did not allow these battalions to continue their march or aim their weapons, for they might have gained a victory which was lesser in its dimensions for Islām than a peace with blessed consequences. Zuhri said:

"When the matter was concluded and it only remained to be written down, 'Umar (ﷺ) sprang up and came to Abū Bakr (ﷺ). He asked: "Abū Bakr (ﷺ), isn't he the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)? Abū Bakr (ﷺ) replied yes. He said: "Aren't we Muslims?" Abū Bakr (ﷺ) sad yes: "Aren't they idolaters?" He said yes. 'Umar (ﷺ) said: 'Well should we give what is debasing to our religion?

Abū Bakr (ﷺ) said: "Umar (ﷺ), follow his orders for I swear that he is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

'Umar (ﷺ) said: And I swear that he is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)."

❑ Then he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: 'Aren't you the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?" He said yes. 'Umar (ﷺ) asked: "Aren't we Muslims? He said yes. 'Umar (ﷺ) asked: "Aren't they idolaters? "He said yes. Then 'Umar (ﷺ) asked: "Well, why should we give what is debasing to our religion?" He said: 'I am the servant and Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). I shall not disobey His order and He will not cause me to be ruined!"[14]

❑ Then the Prophet (ﷺ) called 'Alī ibn abī Ṭālib (ﷺ) and said: "Write: in the Name of Allāh (ﷻ), the Beneficent, the Merciful."

❑ Suhayl said: "I do not know this. But write: In Your Name, O Allāh (ﷻ)." Then Prophet (ﷺ) ordered 'Alī (ﷺ) to write it down and he wrote it. Then he said: "Write: This is what Muhammad (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allāh, has agreed to with Suhayl ibn 'Āmir."

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[14] A sound Ḥadīth, part of the story of Ḥudaybiyah. Al Zuhrī is one in the chain and the Ḥadīth is not one of his *mursals* as the text may suggest.

❑ Suhayl said: "Had I witnessed that you were the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I should not have fought you. But write you name and your father's name."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Write

"This is what Muhammad ibn Abdullāh has agreed to with Suhayl ibn 'Amr. They have agreed to cease waging war among the people for ten years, during which the people will be safe and will desist from attacking one another on condition that whoever comes to Muhammad (ﷺ) from the Quraish without the permission of his guardian will be sent back to them, and whoever by him comes to the Quraish from those with Muhammad (ﷺ) will not be returned to him by them. We shall not show enmity to one another and there will be no secret reservation or disloyalty. He who wishes to enter into a bond and agreement with Muhammad (ﷺ) may do so, and he who wishes to enter into a bond and agreement with the Quraish may do so.

❑ You must withdraw from us this year and not enter Makkah against our will. Next year we shall make way for you and you can enter it with your Companions, and stay there three nights. You may carry a rider's weapons: the swords in their sheaths. You can bring in nothing else.

❑ While the Prophet (ﷺ) was drawing up the document, the son of the negotiator himself came from the Quraish, wishing to join the Muslims. Abū Jandal ibn Suhayl had entered into the religion of Allāh (ﷻ) and met with torture from his family. Now here he was, dragging his shackles of iron. The Muslims had no doubt that Makkah would be conquered, for the Prophet (ﷺ) had told them of his dream in which he was entering it and circumambulating the Ancient House. However, when they saw the conditions of the treaty, their compulsions and Suhayl's obstinacy to the Prophet (ﷺ) they felt dejected to the point of death, and when they saw the case of Abū Jandal it only made things worse.

❑ When Suhayl saw his son, he stood slapped him in the face, seized him by the collar, and then said: Muhammad (ﷺ), the terms were agreed before he came!" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied that he was right, and Suhayl began dragging his son by his collar to take him back to the Quraish.

Abū Jandal shouted at the top of his voice: " O you Muslims, am I to be returned to the idolaters for them to persecute me for my religion?" this made them feel even worse.

However, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Abū Jandal, be patient and seek Allāh's help, for Allāh (ﷻ) will grant relief and a means of escape for you and those who are oppressed along with you. We have signed a treaty with these people: we have given them and they have given us this pledge in Allāh's (ﷻ) name and we shall not betray them."

❑ The treaty was agreed and the Khuza'ah declared their commitment to the bond with the Muslims, while the Banū Bakr declared their commitment to the bond with the Quraish.[15]

❑ A first glance at these terms will show that they injured the rights of the Muslims and appeased the pride and ignorant zealotry of the Quraish. The Prophet's (ﷺ) Companions wondered why they should return to the Quraish anyone who came as a Muslim, and why the Quraish should not return anyone who left the Muslims and went to them. The Prophet (ﷺ) explained the terms in this way. Those who went over the Muslims were saved from their evil. As for the oppressed Muslims, the Quraish would soon learn about them as they had learnt about those before them, and the final victory would be theirs. Were not the Prophet (ﷺ) and those with him oppressed, then Allāh (ﷻ) aided them and withdrew His help from the Quraish before them?

❑ Once again, the Muslims felt despair in their hearts: they were told that they would enter the Sacred Mosque, but they were asked

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[15] All of this is from the story of Ḥubaybiyah by Ibn Isḥāq (the words are his), Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

to return. The Prophet (ﷺ) explained that they would come again to enter it as they had been promised. He did not tell them that they would enter it that year. The Muslims felt heavy with despondency at this sad end and their eyes filled with tears at this unexpected distress. When the Prophet (ﷺ) finished drafting the document, he told his Companions to get up and slaughter their animals, then shave their heads as an end to the 'Umrah, after which they should return to Madīnah. However, no-one moved, even though he gave the order three times. He went into the tent of Umm Salmah and told her of the men's disobedience.

❑ She said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), what do you expect? Go out and do not say a word to anyone until you sacrifice your animal, call your barber and have yourself shaved."

❑ He did so, and when the Muslims saw this they regained their composure and felt the danger of disobeying his order. Thus they quickly got up, sacrificed their animals and then shaved one another. They almost killed one another on account of their excessive grief.[16]

❑ Would that the intentions of good and evil produced their sweet or bitter fruits with the speed that showed up the results of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah! Not many days had passed since the signing of the treaty before the obstinacy which the idolaters showed in it boomeranged on themselves. They themselves began to complain about the clauses which they had dictated, or which their crude zealotry had dictated. Likewise the Muslims looked on in astonishment at the results of the deep forbearance which the Prophet (ﷺ) had displayed, and they felt its blessings to such an extent that their tongues burst forth in praise of Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ The strength of the unbelievers in the peninsula weakened and slackened from the time this treaty was signed. The Quraish used to be considered the leaders of unbelief and the standard bearers of opposition to and persecution of the new religion. However, when the news spread of their treaty with the

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[16] Sound; it is part of the story of Ḥudaybiyah according to Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

Muslims, the threat of the hypocrites, who had been working for their own-benefit, died away and the pagan tribes scattered to various corners of the peninsula, especially since the Quraish froze their opportunistic policies and concentrated, on the other hand, the Muslims expanded their educational, political and military activities, and their propaganda succeeded in uniting a large number of tribes and convincing them to accept Islām.

❑ Many historians count the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah as a victory. Infact Al Zuhri said:

"There was no previous victory in Islām greater than it. There was only fighting when the people clashed. However, when the treaty was agreed, war was laid aside and people were safe from one another. They met and negotiated in discussions and disputes, and everyone to whom Islām was explained, accepted it.

During those two years after Ḥudaybiyah, as many people embraced Islām as had done so in the years before or even more.

❑ Ibn Ḥishām said: "The proof of what Al Zuhri said is that the Prophet (ﷺ) went to Ḥudaybiyah with one thousand four hundred men, whereas two years after that at the conquest of Makkah he had with him ten thousand.

❑ As for the oppressed Muslims at Makkah, one of them, named Abū Baṣīr 'Ubayd ibn Usayd, fled to Madīnah in the hope of staying there. However, the Quraish sent two men to demand his extradition in accordance with the treaty.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "Abū Baṣīr, we have made a pledge with these people, as you know, and our religion does not permit us to be unfaithful. Nevertheless, Allāh (ﷻ) will provide for you, and the oppressed with you, a relief and a means of escape. So go back to your people.

❑ Abū Baṣīr was saddened by this and said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), will you return me to the idolaters for them to persecute me for my religion?" The Prophet (ﷺ) only repeated his hope for imminent relief, then he sent Abū Baṣīr with the

two men back to Makkah.[17] Abū Baṣīr refused to surrender to this fate, and on the way he tricked one of the men into giving him his sword and killed him. The other fled in fear to Madīnah to tell the Prophet (ﷺ) what Abū Baṣīr had done.

However, Abū Baṣīr appeared, sword in hand, and said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), you have been faithful to your pledge, and Allāh (ﷻ) had relieved you. You handed me over to the men, and I resisted with my religion from being persecuted or sent back."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Woe unto his mother. A kindler of war, if others were with him."[18]

❑ Abū Baṣīr realized that there was no place for him in Makkah and no refuge in Madīnah. He went to the seashore near a place called 'Ayṣ, and from there he threatened the caravans of the Quraish which passed through the road of Saha. The Muslims at Makkah heard of his activity and the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying: "A kindler of war, if others were with him." They joined him one after the other until about seventy dissenters, including Abū Jandal, were with him. They formed an army which harassed the Quraish, killing any of them who fell into their hands and intercepting their caravans. Eventually the Quraish sent to the Prophet, begging him to take in those people for they had no need of them. In this way the Quraish waived the clause which they had dictated in obstinacy and the Muslims had accepted unwillingly.[19]

❑ The story of Abū Baṣīr, Abū Jandal and their brethren is very

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[17] Narrated by Ibn Isḥāq without a chain and Ibn Hishām took it from him. Bukhārī narrated it briefly in the following words: "Abū Baṣīr, a man from the Quraish, who was a Muslim, came to him. They sent two men after him and said: (observe) the treaty which you made with us' and he handed him over to the two men."

[18] Sound: part of the story by Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

[19] Not authentic: Ibn 'Uqbah narrated it from Al Zuhri as *mursal*, as in *Fatḥ-al Bari* and *Al-Isti'āb*, of Ibn 'Abdul Barr on the life of Abū Baṣīr. However, Ibn Isḥāq narrated it with a different chain, and Ibn Hishām recorded it in his *Sīrah* as *mursal*. Al-Ḥākim completed the chain in his *Mustdrak* on the authority of 'Ā'ishah and his chain is good. Thus it is better to rely on this rather than what is in this book. It is supported by a Ḥadīth of Umm Salāmah narrated by Al-Bayhaqī in his Sunnah.

significant. It is the story of a struggling faith, despised by enemies and unaided by friends. It makes clear that faith in Allāh (ﷻ) penetrated the hearts of these people without the assistance of any outside force except the purity of their souls. They were deprived of the spiritual support which comes from mixing with the Prophet (ﷺ) and listening to him while he recited or gave advice. On the other hand, they were compensated for that by contact with his Revelation and extracts from his teachings. Thus, in their following of the truth, rejection of injustice and love of adventure, they were a wonderful example of a mighty, struggling Islām.

❑ Abū Baṣīr never returned to the Prophet (ﷺ). This was because the permission to reside with him came while he was on his deathbed. Mūsā ibn 'Uqbah (رحمه الله) narrated that Abū Baṣīr's men had seized a caravan in which was Abul 'Ās ibn al Rabi' the Prophet's (ﷺ) son-in-law, who had not yet accepted Islām. They captured everyone in the caravan, except Abul 'Ās because of his status. He went to Zaynab, his wife, and complained to her about what had happened to his friends and their wealth. Zaynab spoke to the Prophet (ﷺ) about this, and the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up and delivered a sermon to the people, saying:

"We have made these people our in-laws: we have made Abul 'Ās our son-in-law and found him to be a good son-in-law. He has come from Syria with some friends of his from the Quraish, and Abū Jandal and Abū Baṣīr have captured them and all that they had with them. Zaynab, the daughter of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), has asked me to grant them protection, so will you grant Abul 'Ās and his friends protection?"

All the Muslims agreed and when the news of this reached Abū Jandal, they released the prisoners and gave them back all they had taken, including a string of camels or a camel's land rope.

❑ Then the Prophet's (ﷺ) letter reached Abū Baṣīr as he was breathing his last, telling him to leave that place and return to where he loved to be. He died with the letter on his chest, and

Abū Jandal buried him. In the meantime Abul 'Ās ibn al Rabi' took all the goods and went to Makkah, where he distributed them to their owners.

When he had finished, he said: "O men of the Quraish, is there any of your property left with me which I have not yet handed over?

They replied: "No. May God reward you kindly, for we have found you to be faithful and noble."

He said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), the only thing which prevented me from declaring my acceptance of Islām before reaching you was that you might think that I accepted Islām to steal your property. I testify that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ) and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and Messenger." He returned to Madīnah, where the Prophet (ﷺ) handed him his wife, Zaynab.[20] Although they had been separated by the difference in religion, he did not make a new contract for them.

❑ Shortly after the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah the Muslims refused to send back to their guardians the women who migrated to them, either because they understood the Treaty to refer specifically to men, or because they were afraid that the women who accepted Islām might succumb under persecution and would be unable to go elsewhere as did Abū Jandal, Abū Baṣīr and others. Whatever the reason, the withholding of the Muslim women who migrated was done under instructions from the Qur'ān. The Muslims were charged with the responsibility of compensating the women's idolatrous husbands so that they could marry again if they did not wish to become Muslim and retain their original wives.

﴾O you who believe! When believing women come to you as fugitives, examine them. Allah is best Aware of their faith. Then, if you know them to be true believers, do not send them back to the disbelievers.

[20] A sound Ḥadīth, narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Al Tirmidhī, Al Ḥākim, Aḥmad and Ibn Hishām in his *sīrah* on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. His chain is good; Al Tirmidhī said: "There is nothing wrong with it, and Aḥmad confirmed its authenticity.

They are not lawful for the disbelievers, nor are the disbelievers lawful for them.) (Qur'ān 60: 10)

❑ The āyah (verse) points out, along with the laws it contains, what a woman used to enjoy by way of freedom of thought and respect for her person. If this should happen today, a large number of Muslims would ask: who examines her, a man or a woman? If a man, then young or old? And is she to be examined directly or behind a screen?

With the Jews Once Again

There remained two groups of inveterate enemies facing the Muslims. The bedouin Arabs, who traversed the desert like camels, understood little. If any prey appeared, they would fly after it. Seldom were they attracted by talk of belief in Allāh (ﷻ) and the Last Day. The Jews, who thought that prophethood was their exclusive right and never ceased to oppose the Muslims, deceived Muhammad (ﷺ) and rejected his message. They were deluded by the honour which they had inherited from the Torah, and so they disputed long with the Muslims and strove with all their might not to recognize them. They went as far as to incite others against them, as you have seen. Thus they displayed a strange mixture of malice, pride and deceit. Inspite of the severe thrashings which they received in their struggle against the Muslims, they never budged an inch from their dastardly plot.

❑ The enmity against Islām brought together the stupid bedouin with the cunning Jews. When the confederates failed to defeat Madīnah and the Jews of the Qurayzah reaped the harvest of their treachery, the Jews of Khaybar could not find any rest nor did they try to make peace with the Muslims. On the contrary, they began initiating contacts with the Ghatafān and the bedouin who lived around them form another front against Islām. Nevertheless, the Muslims were alert to these conspiracies, and no sooner did they return from Ḥudaybiyah at the end of the

sixth year than they took off again in *Muharram* of the seventh year, in the direction of Khaybar, to shatter the power of the Jews in those quarters.

❑ It did not slip the minds of the Muslims, before travelling, to drive a wedge into the united front of the Ghatafān and the Jews. They made the Ghatāfan think that the attack was directed at them and that the Muslim forces were about to meet them. Ibn Isḥāq said:

"They were told that the Ghatāfan had grouped themselves against the Prophet (ﷺ) when they heard that he was heading for Khaybar. They came out to help the Jews against him, and when they had travelled a stage they heard the news that their properties and families behind them were in danger. They thought that the Muslims had taken another route to them. So they turned back on their tracks and stayed with their families and properties, leaving Khaybar to the Prophet (ﷺ)."

❑ Thus the plan succeeded in isolating the Jews from their allies, the idolaters. When the Prophet (ﷺ) was almost upon the fortified town and had prepared for combat, he asked his Companions to stop. Then he supplicated to Allāh (ﷻ) with these words:

"O Allāh (ﷻ), Lord of the heavens and what they shade, Lord of the earths and what they carry, Lord of the devils, and those they lead astray, and Lord of the winds and what they blow away, we seek of you the good of this town, the good of its people and the good of what is in it, and we seek refuge in you from its evil, the evil of its people and the evil of what is in it.[21]

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[21] A good Ḥadīth. Ibn Hishām narrated it from Ibn Isḥāq, who narrated it from Abū Mu'tab ibn 'Amr. One of the men in the chain has not been named. In his version, Al-Bayhaqī called him Ṣalāh ibn Kaysāh, as in *Al-Bidāyah*. However, the one who narrated from him, Ibrahim ibn Isma'īl ibn Majma, is weak. Thus Al Bayhaqī declared this chain to be weak. Nevertheless, it is reinforced by what is narrated from Al-Bayhaqī, Al-Ḥākim and Ibn al Sunni on the authority of Suhayb, who said: "Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) saw any village which he wanted to enter, he would say this *du'ā*

Al-Ḥākim considered its chain to be sound, although there is some doubt about this. Yet there is further support in the Ḥadīth of Abū Lubābah, narrated by Ṭabarāni and its chain is good.

Then he said: "Advance in the name of Allāh (ﷻ).[22]

❑ It seems that the Jews first thought that the Muslims were marching against the Ghatafān, so they did not pay them much attention.

They went as usual in the morning to their fields, carrying their shovels and baskets, and were surprised when they saw the Muslims coming towards them. They hurried back to their fortresss in dismay. The Jews, as the Muslims learnt from their wars with them, did not rely on sending their armies into the open air. They disliked confrontation in those vast fields. The character trait which they could never abandon dictated that they should fight from behind high walls. Is this not an indication of their love of life and dislike of death?

❑ When the Prophet (ﷺ) saw them hurrying to their fortress, he wanted to strike terror into their hearts, so he shouted: "Allāh (ﷻ) is the Greatest! Khaybar is destroyed! When we arrive in a people's quarters the morning turns bad for those who have been warned."[23] Sinning towns bring down destruction upon themselves sooner or later. It is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When adultery and usury spread in a village, it will bring upon itself the Wrath of Allāh (ﷻ)."[24]

❑ This twofold corruption is widespread among the Jews. To this day they are among the masters of usury in this world and some are the leaders of libertinism and prostitution, whose women do not reject the hand of any flirt. This, however, does not negate the fact that among them there is a group known for their morals and chastity, though they are few. "And from the people of Moosā there is a group who guides by the truth and by

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[22] Weak. It comes from the above-mentioned Ḥadīth of Abū Mu'tab and you have seen its weakness. I have not found any support for it so it remains weak.

[23] Sound: narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Anas (ﷺ).

[24] Sound: narrated by Al Ḥākim on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. He said it had a sound chain and Al Dhahabī agreed with this. It was also narrated by Abū Ya'lā on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd and its chain is good, as in *Al-Targhīb*.

it they judge." However it is the majority, not the minority who determine the fates of their peoples.

❑ The Muslims launched their attack on the well-fortified buildings, and soon fortress after fortress began to crumble at their onslaught. The Jews struggled desperately, for Khaybar was their most fertile land and impregnable fortress. The siege continued, and as one garrison fell the Jews continued to resist with another.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I shall give the banner tomorrow to a man who loves Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger and whom Allāh (ﷻ) and His messenger love." The Muslims spent the night wondering who it was. Next morning they were all expectant to see who was that person. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) called 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (ؓ) and gave him the banner.

'Alī (ؓ) said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)! should I fight them till they retreat from there?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "Keep going without a halt until you enter their quarters, then invite them to Islām and tell them of their duty to Allāh (ﷻ). By Allāh (ﷻ), that Allāh (ﷻ) should guide a single man through you is better than if you were to have heaps of gold."[25]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) offered this timely advice to prevent the desire of his men for worldly riches. Although the wealth of the Jews if they were defeated, would be vast, but the blessings of those who fought them, if they were rightly guided, would be greater. If the Jews had accepted the laws of Allāh (ﷻ) and given up the selfish ways in which they lived and dealt with people, they would have been left in peace. However, they insisted on war. So 'Alī (ؓ) attacked them and pressed on till their fortress fell and the Muslims occupied it. The battle cry during the siege of Khaybar was "Ya Manṣūr, amut, amut!"

❑ A Jewish horseman by the name of Marhab came out of the fortress and challenged the Muslims to a duel, reciting:

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[25] Sound: narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd.

Khaybar knows that I am Marhab,
A seasoned warrior armed to the teeth,
Piercing here and slashing there
When the enraged lions come forward.

❑ Some say that 'Alī (ﷺ) killed him, whereas others say it was Muhammad ibn Maslamah, who was enraged because his brother Maḥmūd ibn Maslamah was killed by a millstone which was dropped on his head.[26] After Marhab was killed, his brother, Yasir came forward and Al Zubayr challenged him. Al Zubayr's mother, Ṣafiyah, was among the women who had come with the army to help them fight the Jews.

She was afraid that her son would be killed, and the Prophet (ﷺ) reassured her: No, your son will kill him, *Inshā'allah*," and Al Zubayr did kill him.[27]

❑ The Jews held on firmly to their remaining fortresses, defending them like those in despair. The Muslims tightened the siege against them, wishing to end this war quickly for they were worn out with hunger. Many of them were struck down by various sicknesses owing to the bad climate and the unhealthiness of the swamps. Then someone came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and informed him that the Jews were not worried about the siege, since they had access to secret waterholes and they would go out at night to draw water. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered their waterholes to be cut off[28] to force them to fight or surrender. They came out and engaged the Muslims in a violent struggle, during the course of which a number of Muslims were martyred after they had paved the way for the fall of the fortress, which was called the Zubayr Fortress, at the end of a chain fortresses called Al Nitāh. The Muslims were able to capture them all after they entered the fortress of Na'im, Sa'b, Watih and Salālim.

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[26] I say the first is correct because it comes in Muslim and the Mustadrak of Al-Ḥākim, who said that there was abundant evidence that 'Alī (ﷺ) killed Marhab.

[27] Weak: narrated by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq with a muddled chain.

[28] Not authentic: narrated by Al-Wāqidi with a muddled chain, and Al-Wāqidi is not acceptable.

❑ There remained one more chain which the Muslims prepared to attack. The Prophet (ﷺ) went for a citadel called Samwān and fought fiercely around it. A man named 'Azūl came out of it, seeking a duel. Al-Habbāb ibn al Mundhir attacked him and cut at his right arm upto the elbow. The sword fell from the Jew's hand and he turned and fled. Al-Habbāb pursued him and cut his Achilles tendon. Another Jew advanced and one of the Muslims confronted him. However, the Jew killed him, and Abū Dajanah went after him and killed him in turn. Then the Muslims shouted *Allahu Akbar* and charged the fortress with Abū Dajanah in the lead. After great difficulty they managed to enter it and inside they found furniture, food, sheep and merchandise.

❑ Some of the Jews managed to escape and they fled to their brothers in the fortress of Buzat. The Muslims followed and the two parties showered each other with hails of arrows. The Prophet's (ﷺ) fingertip was injured in this battle. Nevertheless, the Muslims kept pounding the enemy until this fortress also fell, and they took captive all those in it. Then the Muslims prepared catapults to destroy the remaining fortresses with those who were hiding inside, and the Jews felt certain that it would be death unless they surrendered. So Ibn Abil Ḥuqayq came out and offered to surrender on condition that they be exiled from the land of Khaybar and be allowed to take all they could carry, what remained being for the Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) accepted the terms, and stipulated that they should not conceal anything, for if they did then the agreement would be null and void.[29]

When it was discovered that some of them had broken this agreement they were killed. All the Jews surrendered and they came to the Prophet (ﷺ), beseeching him to allow them to retain half of the cultivable lands. This he accepted but he did not give them this concession for eternity for fear of their treachery. Thus he said to them: "If we wish to expel you, we

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[29] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Al Bayhaqī on the authority of Ibn 'Umar with a sound chain. Abū Dāwūd also narrated it.

shall do so.[30]

❑ During this battle it happened that there was a black Ethiopian slave who was tending the sheep of his Jewish master. When he saw the people of Khaybar taking up arms and preparing for war, he asked what they were doing. They replied that they were going to fight that man who claimed to be a prophet. The mention of prophethood had its effect on the man, who came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with his sheep and asked: "What do you say? What are you calling the people to?"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: " I am calling the people to Islām, to testify that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ) and that I am His Messenger, and to worship no-one but Him."

❑ The slave said: "What will I have if I testify and believe?"

❑ "You shall have paradise if you die on that." He accepted Islām, then said: "O Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ), these sheep are a trust in my charge."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Lead them out into the open and leave them. Allāh (ﷻ) will discharge your trust for you." He did so, and the sheep returned to their master. Thus the Jew came to know that his slave had accepted Islām.

❑ The men having prepared themselves for fighting, the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up, exhorted them and urged them to *jihād*. The two groups clashed and the black slave was one of those killed. His body was taken back to the camp, and the Prophet (ﷺ), so it is narrated, looked into the tent where it lay, then faced his Companions and said: "Allāh (ﷻ) has been gracious to this slave and brought him benefit. I saw by his head two of the bright-eyed *houris*, although he never prostrated once to Allāh (ﷻ)![31]

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[30] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and others on the authority of Ibn 'Umar.

[31] Weak: narrated by Ibn Kathīr as mursal. Also Al-Bayhaqī narrated it from Shurahbīl from Jābir. However, Shurahbīl made mistakes. Al-Ḥākim narrated from the same source and said it was authentic. Yet Al Dhahabī commented on it, saying, "In fact, Shurahbīl is condemned."

❑ In this campaign the Prophet (ﷺ) gave permission to the women who volunteered to come along with him. Ibn Isḥāq narrated: "The Muslim women were present at Khaybar with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and he gave them something from the spoils, and did not give them a complete share.[32]

❑ Imām Aḥmad narrated from Hashraj ibn Ziyad from his grandmother:

"We went with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) on the expedition of Khaybar. I was the sixth of six women. When it came to his notice that there were women with him he sent for us. We could see he looked angry. He asked what had made us come and on whose orders we had come.

We replied, "We give arrows to the archers, we give them *sawīq* to drink, we have medicine for the wounded and we spin wool to assist in the cause of Allāh (ﷻ)."

He said: "Then go."

She continued that after the conquest of Khaybar he gave them shares like the shares of the men. Hashraj asked what it was that he gave them, and she said, dates.[33] Ibn Kathīr maintained that he gave them a portion of the fruits of the land as he gave the men, although he did not give them any part of the land itself as was given to the men and this is true.

❑ In the Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd, some women from the Banū Ghifar said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), we wish to go with you on this expedition (he was travelling to Khaybar) to nurse the wounded and help the Muslims in any way we can."

He replied: "With the blessings of Allāh (ﷻ).[34]

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[32] Ibn Isḥāq mentioned it without a chain, and Ibn Hishām took it from him. However, he substantiated it with the Ḥadīth concerning the women, which, as you will see in the next footnote, is weak.

[33] Weak: it is in *Musnad* of Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd. Ḥashraj is unknown as Al Dhahabī stated and Ibn Ḥājar pointed out in *Al Taqrīb*.

[34] Weak: narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad and Ibn Hishām, all from Ibn Isḥāq, who narrated it with his chain from a woman from the Banū Ghifar. In it is Umayyah bint Abil Ṣālt, who is unknown.

❑ Ṣafīyah, the daughter of Ḥuyayy ibn Akhṭab, the Jewish chief, was among the women captured at Khaybar. She fell into the hands of one of the *Ṣaḥabah* as spoils of war. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) took her back then freed her and married her, making her dowry her freedom.[35]

❑ When the prophet (ﷺ) had gained total control, the wife of Salām ibn Mishkam offered him poisoned roasted sheep. She put a large amount of poison in the leg since she knew that the Prophet (ﷺ) had a special liking for that joint.

He took a bite from it and then threw it aside, saying: "This bone is telling me that it is poisoned."

With him was Bishr ibn al Bar, who ate some of the meat. The offender was brought before him and she confessed to what she had done.

She said to the Prophet (ﷺ): "I have reached a certain position among my people, which is not hidden from you. So I said, 'If he is a king we shall be rid of him, and if he is a prophet he will be informed'." The Prophet (ﷺ) spared her. Then Bishr died of the poison,[36] and it is said that he had her put to death for that, whereas others say she accepted Islām so he forgave her.

❑ The Jews of Khaybar remained, tilling the soil in return for half of its produce. However, their hatred for the Muslims caused them to commit some crimes. One of the Anṣār was murdered, and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umr's hands were dislocated in the days of his father's caliphate.

❑ 'Umar (ﷺ) spoke to the people, saying: "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) stipulated with the Jews of Khaybar that we might expel them whenever we wished. They have attacked 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) and dislocated his arms, as you have been informed, and with their attack on the Anṣār before him, we

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[35] Sound: narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim from Anas (ﷺ).

[36] Sound: narrated in this manner by Ibn Ḥishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. Bukhārī and Muslim narrated it from Anas, and Bukhārī and others from Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ).

have no doubt that they are the culprits. We have no enemy there except them. Thus whoever has property in Khaybar, let him go and retrieve it, for I am expelling the Jews?" And he expelled them.[37]

❑ No doubt the defeat which the Children of Israel sustained at Khaybar completely destroyed their military might in the peninsula. Thus the Jews of Fadak came seeking amnesty. The Jews of Wadi al Qira fought after they were invited to Islām. The Prophet (ﷺ) informed them that if they accepted Islām they would be allowed their properties and their lives, and their punishment would be left to Allāh (ﷻ). So when they refused, a limited war broke out between the two groups and ended in the morning with the defeat of the Jews. Finally the Jews of Tayma surrendered.

❑ Islām spread its reign over this land which had for sometime been in the hands of the Jews to live on as they desired. The lesson which we can extract from these battles and the expulsions which followed is that the land belongs to Allāh (ﷻ) and He causes whom He pleases to inherit it. He does not take it away from one people and give it to another for favouritism. The nation which becomes corrupt with the bounty is deprived of it; then it is given to another who will value it and thank Allāh (ﷻ) for it. The nation which becomes puffed up with pride loses possession of its own self, its rights and all its affairs, and it falls as a slave into the hands of others who will direct its affairs as they wish.

❑ This law was applied to the Children of Israel by force when they neglected the directions of the Torah and followed their own desires. It was applied after that to the Muslims the day they deviated into error and ignored the guidance which was with them:

﴾Even so is the grasp of your Lord when He grasps the townships while they are doing wrong. Indeed, His grasp is painful, and very strong.﴿ (Qur'ān 11: 102)

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[37] Sound: narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim from Ibn 'Umar.

❑ Life is an advance and a retreat, a step forward and a step backward. A quick glance at the history of the mankind will give the impression that the position of leadership is not secured by a nation unless there is another nation preparing to take it away. The states which have reigned are like the waves of the sea: sometimes they rise high, then they gradually dwindle as they reach the shore, weak and calm. Then they may return with the tide and reach their peak, only to start the ignoble descent once again as they lose their sources of energy. The Children of Israel were mighty kings, then they were deprived of their kingdom and might for the growing state of Islām to inherit them, and this change took place for the benefit of the whole of mankind.

❑ Why did the Jews support the pagans against Islām? And for whose benefit was it done? The Jews look at the world and at religion from the point of view of their own private gains. This is what made them oppose Islām so vehemently. Nevertheless, Providence wished to make the new nation into a message of complete change because of the corruption that had become so rampant throughout the whole world and because of the rot and stagnation which had overtaken its civilization. If, therefore, a handful of bedouin or a handful of Jews obstructed this colossal change, motivated by cheap malice or despicable greed, then it was they who wronged themselves if they were drowned in the storm.

❑ If the Jews had remained in the Arabian peninsula another thousand years they would have made it even more divided, and the other regions of the earth would not have gained any benefit from their existence. Perhaps there would have been an increase in cereals and fruit, which they cultivated expertly. However, the benefit of this increase would have reached others only at the cost of some corruption, which the Children of Israel export to the world through their interest based businesses and immoral character.

❑ Islām, on the other hand, came out of the peninsula from the very first day as a message of faith and reform. It deserved to gain victory and spread because of the truth and benefit which it contained. Nevertheless, when the causes of disintegration infiltrated its people just as they had infiltrated the Jews before, they were ejected from their lands and scattered here and there, exactly as others had experienced.

Return of the Emigrants from Abyssinia

The conquest of Khaybar coincided with the arrival of Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib and the others who had migrated with him to Abyssinia. The Prophet (ﷺ) was extremely happy at the return of these noble Companions. They had left Makkah, fleeing with their faith from persecution, and today they were returning to see that Islām was supreme and that its authority was stretching north and south of the Arabian peninsula. Thus there was no more fear of tyranny or oppression.

❑ When they arrived in Madīnah, the Prophet (ﷺ) said joyfully: "By Allāh (ﷻ), I do not know which is more pleasing, the conquest of Khaybar or the arrival of Ja'far.[38]

❑ Ja'far and his comrades had remained in Abyssinia for some ten years, during which time much of the Qur'ān was revealed and many battles took place with the infidels. The Muslims went through such a variety of experiences before and after the Hijrah to Madīnah that some of them began thinking that those who had migrated to Abyssinia were of a lesser status than they.

❑ Abū Mūsā al Ash'ārī reported:

"Some people used to say to us: "we have preceded you to the Hijrah." Asmā bint 'Amis, who had migrated to Abyssinia, visited Ḥafṣah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) entered and when he saw her he said: "who is this?

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[38] A good Ḥadīth, narrated by Al-Ḥākim and Al Ṭabarānī on the authority of *Al Sha'bī* as *mursal*, its chain being sound. Al-Ḥākim also narrated it by another chain, which has no missing links although there is some weakness in it.

"Asmā, daughter of 'Amis, she replied.

'Umar (ﷺ) asked: "Is this the Abyssinian? Is this the seafarer?"

Yes, answered Asmā.

'Umar (ﷺ) said: "We have preceded you to the Hijrah so we are closer to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) than you."

She became angry and said: "By no means! By Allāh (ﷻ), you were with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and he fed the hungry among you and exhorted the ignorant among you, while we were in a distant, hateful land in Abyssinia, which we bore for the sake of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger. By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall not eat or drink until I mention what you have said to the Prophet (ﷺ) and ask him about it. By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall not lie, nor shall I digress from what you say nor shall I add anything to it." When she came to the Prophet (ﷺ) she said: "O Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ), 'Umar (ﷺ) said such-and-such.

And what do you say? he asked.

'I said such-and-such.

❑ He then said: 'He is not closer to me than you. He and his Companions have made one Hijrah, whereas you, who travelled by ship, have made two.[39]

❑ In a short time these returnees were able to acquire whatever knowledge of the Qur'ān and Sunnah they had missed, and they joined the ranks of those who had preceded them to the call of *jihād* for Allāh's (ﷻ) sake. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave them a portion of the spoils of Khaybar[40] along with those who had witnessed Ḥudaybiyah.[41]

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[39] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by the two Sheikhs.

[40] A good Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī on the authority of Abū Mūsā.

[41] A good Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Al-Ḥākim, Al-Bayhaqī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal on the authority of Majma 'ibn Jāriyah "that Khaybar was divided among those who witnessed Ḥudaybiyah and no others besides them". Al-Ḥākim said that it had a sound chain and Al Dhahabī agreed with him. It is supported by a Ḥadīth of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ), narrated by Al Tayalisi and Al-Bayhaqī with a good chain. Ibn Isḥāq says in his *Sīrah*: "Khaybar was divided among those who witnessed Ḥudaybiyah, whether or not they were present at Khaybar, except Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh.

He did not include any others besides them, for Allāh (ﷻ) had promised Khaybar as a generous compensation for those who had travelled to Makkah and pledged their lives under the tree of *Riḍwān*.

Harnessing of the Bedouin

No sooner had the Muslims solved the problem of the Jews than they began turning their energies toward the bedouin Arabs who remained pagan. We have already pointed out that their unity had been shattered ever since the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah between the Quraish and the Muslims. Only yesterday they were a united force laying siege to the city of Islām. Today, however, the situation was different. The Children of Israel were defeated and the people of Makkah had withdrawn. Now it was possible for the Muslims to deal with the bedouin tribes one by one and quell their evil. The bedouin were hard and crude people. We cannot forget how up to the twentieth century they took pleasure in attacking the caravans of pilgrims and even slaughter a pilgrim for a few *dirhams*. Their knowledge of worldly affairs and the rights of the hereafter was a cause for great concern among their teachers.

❑ Islām made great efforts to raise their material and moral circumstances. However, their ambushing of the Islāmic missionaries made the Muslims confront them with force to remove this source of worry. One of the most important actions of the Muslims after their return from Khaybar and their journey to Makkah for the compensatory '*Umrah* as promised in the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah was the dispatching of scouting parties in the deserts of Najd. It is not necessary for us to itemize the details of all of the skirmishes, for though they enhanced the military might of the Muslims, they were more akin to police patrols than to mobilized armies. The main reason for them was to strengthen security, stop the raids on Madīnah, and enable the Muslim missionaries to travel with the teachings of the divine message without fear of treachery or attack.

❑ The conditions of these tribes strongly resembled those in Saudi villages in the recent feudal era, when the village chief held a thousand votes in his village. The talk of political freedom in such an atmosphere is nothing but a fairy tale. Similarly, the tribal chiefs of old had the total support of these clans in war and peace, and it was always the desires of these chiefs which prevailed. If, therefore, there were many foolish rulers who were blindly obeyed and their policy was to raid and flee as the opportunity arose, do you think that the missionaries could be left in such an environment to carry out their work in peace? To work for the establishment of peace is different from forcing people to accept certain beliefs. The aim of the first is to remove all pressure and influences from society, so that if individuals in a tribe accept Islām, they will not encounter anyone with a whip to deter them. However, the other is to use the whip to force people to accept a particular set of beliefs.
❑ The expeditions which the Prophet (ﷺ) dispatched in different direction carried with them the word of Allāh (ﷻ) so that they might read from it.

﴾Say: O mankind, I am only a plain warner to you. Those who believe and do good works, for them is pardon and a rich provision; while those who strive to thwart Our Revelations, such are the rightful owners of the Fire.﴿ (Qur'ān 22: 49-51)

Striving to thwart the Revelation is a dangerous thing. If it had been done only with the tongue, then no-one would have paid attention to it, since falsehood can never vanquish truth in a free debate. It was, in fact, an effort to thwart the Revelation by means of might and force.

﴾And when Our Revelations are recited to them, you see the denial on the faces of those who disbelieve; they all but attack those who recite Our Revelations to them.﴿ (Qur'ān 22: 72)

❑ The Muslims proceeded to spread the *da'wah* within the Arabian peninsula on this just basis, and from the time they

concluded the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah they did not cease to convey the message and enlighten others. They gained a noticeable success in this regard, and many tribes entered into the pact with them, while large groups of bedouin deserted the Quraish and no-one entered into the pact with them. The march of events in this direction actively paved the way for the supremacy of Islām, then the conquest of Makkah itself at a later stage.

❑ The call to Islām within the Arabian peninsula did not make the Prophet (ﷺ) neglect another right that Allāh (ﷻ) had over him, which was to inform the mankind of the clear Revelation given to him by Allāh (ﷻ). Let the lamp be raised high, so that its guiding rays might penetrate even farther into those places which had been submerged in-darkness for many reasons.

﴾And this Qur'ān has been inspired in me, that with It I may warn you and whomever it may reach. Do you in truth bear witness that there are gods besides Allah? Say, I bear no such witness. Say, He is only One God. Indeed, I am innocent of that which you associate [with Him].﴿ (Qur'ān 6: 19)

So let it go to the Magians and to the Christians, and let it call them to the worship of the One True God, submission to Him and absolute obedience to His (ﷻ) command.

Letters to the Kings and Rulers

The Persians were in occupation of large sections of southern Arabia while the Romans were in occupation of other sections in the north. The religions of the occupiers had spread in those lands which were subjected to their rule, and it is vain to think that the cause of this spread was purely intellectual freedom. In any case, Zoroastrianism was prevalent in those areas under Persian rule and Christianity in those areas under Roman rule. The governors of these territories were appointed by the ruling states and were in complete subservience to their command.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) thought it best to send his letters to the

heads of the great states as well as to the governors of the occupied provinces, calling them to Allāh (ﷻ) and presenting Islām. Muslim narrated on the authority of Anas (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) wrote to the Khosrau of Persia, Caesar of Rome, the Negus of Abyssinia (not the one whose funeral prayer he offered), and to all the tyrants, calling them to Islām.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) sent Diḥyah ibn Khalīfah with his letter to Caesar. It was not an easy matter to confront Caesar with a strange invitation, especially since it happened to be coming from a simple bedouin in the estimation of the Romans who belonged to a people under their dominion. In consideration of these matters, the Prophet (ﷺ) chose for this mission on who would undertake it with faith and hope for Allāh's reward, not caring for the consequences it might have on him or the results it might have on those whom he was to invite.

❑ Ibn Ḥibbān narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Who will go with this scroll of mine to Caesar in return for paradise?"

A man asked: "Even if he does not accept?"

"Even if he does not accept,"

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied. Dihyah took the letter and travelled to Roman territory, where he happened to meet Heraclius on his way to Jerusalem to make a pilgrimage in thanksgiving for his victory over the Persians. Caesar took the letter and read it:

In the Name of Allāh (ﷻ), the Compassionate, the Merciful. From Muhammad (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allāh, to Heraclius, emperor of Rome: peace be on those who follow the guidance. To proceed: I hereby call you to accept Islām. If you do you will be safe and Allāh (ﷻ) give you your reward twice over. If you turn away, however, you will have the sin of your subjects on your shoulders.[42]

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[42] A sound Ḥadīth from the point where Caesar took the letter to the end. It was narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

﴾O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allāh, and that we shall ascribe no partner to Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides Allāh. And if they turn away, then say: "Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered [to Him].﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 64)

❑ Heraclius' entourage were disturbed at the attention he gave to this letter, and they were even more worried when he suggested, we do not know whether seriously or as a joke, that they should all embrace this religion. Heraclius, in our opinion, was a politician. He cared for religion only to the extent that it consolidated his kingdom and strengthened his power. He became the head of state at a time when the ecclesiastical differences about the nature of Jesus were raging most fiercely and were causing fearful divisions in the nation. Although he had tried to bring the divergent opinions together and unite the opposing churches, he had failed, and the Jacobites and other factions in Egypt and Syria had rebelled against him.

❑ Theological talk was therefore nothing new to him. Erasing the differences of opinion in the interests of the state was his policy, and perhaps deep down he felt that all those who stirred up such differences were fools. Maybe he toyed with the idea, for a short while, of abandoning the doctrine of the Trinity for the simplicity of monotheism. However, he decided against it, since it would drag the state through even more serious divisions. The empire was for him more important than anything else.

❑ Acting on his political instinct, he decided to summon Diḥyah and make him feel that he had accepted Islām, then he gave him some *dinars* and sent him away.

Diḥyah returned to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the news, upon which the latter said: "The enemy of Allāh (ﷻ) has lied. He is not a Muslim."

And he ordered the *dinars* to be distributed among the needy.[43]

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[43] Narrated by Abū 'Ubayd on the authority of Bakr ibn 'Abdullāh al Muzni. Its chain is authentic but it is *mursal*. However, Al Zurqāni, quoting from *Fatḥ al Bari*, said that it was also in the Musnad of Aḥmad. This should be checked, for its *Ṣaḥabi* is not mentioned.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) also sent letters to the governors of the various Arab provinces under Roman dominion, and their reply was even more harsh than that of Heraclius himself. The governor of Syria read the Prophet's (ﷺ) letter, which said:

"In the name of Allāh (ﷻ), the Compassionate, the Merciful From Muhammad (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allāh, to Al-Ḥārith Ibn Abi Shamr: peace be on those who follow the guidance and believe in Allāh (ﷻ) and testify to the truth. I invite you to believe in Allāh (ﷻ) alone Who has no partners, and your kingdom will remain.[44]

❑ Upon reading it he flung it to the ground and said: "Who shall take my kingdom away from me?" He began making preparations to fight the Muslims. Al Ḥārith was not a true king as to act so haughtily about his kingdom. He was a servant of the Roman conquerors, carrying out their wishes and clinging to their heels. As is true of many of the leaders of the East in modern times, who were established by the imperialists to keep the oppressed nations in their clutches. The gift which he rejected was the only hope for him to become an honourable ruler if only he had accepted it.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) sent a similar letter to the governor of Busra, on of the Roman provinces, by the hand of Al-Ḥārith ibn 'Umayr al-Azdi. He was intercepted on the Way by Shurahbil ibn 'Amr of the Ghassan tribe, who asked him: "Are you one of Muhammad's (ﷺ) Messenger?" When he answered yes, Shurahbil ordered him to be killed. Upon hearing the news of this incident, the Muslims in Madīnah felt that their dignity had been injured. They realized that their relations with the Romans would not develop on the basis of justice and respect until great efforts had been made on their part.

❑ The Patriarch of Alexandria sent a kind reply to the Prophet (ﷺ) neither accepting him nor attacking him. When he received the letter from Ḥātib ibn Abi Balta'ah he said: "If he is a prophet,

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[44] Al Wāqidi narrated it without a chain as is stated in *Al Bidāyah.*

what has prevented him from calling down the curse of God on those who opposed him and ejected him from his town?"

Ḥātib replied: "What prevented Jesus, who was arrested by the people to be killed, from calling down the curse of God on them?"

The Patriarch said: "Excellent! You are a wise man sent by a wise man."

❑ He wrote to the Prophet (ﷺ), saying:

"To Muhammad (ﷺ), son of 'Abdullāh, from the Patriarch of Alexandria: Peace be on you. To proceed: I have read your letter and understood what you have mentioned in it and what are you calling towards. I know that there is a prophet yet to come and I used to think he would appear in Syria. I have treated your messenger well, and have sent to you, two slave-girls who have a high position among the Copts. I have also sent clothes and I am presenting you with a mule to ride.

What did Muhammad (ﷺ) do with this? He accepted the gifts in consideration for the feeling which went behind them, even though he thought that the best gift would be to believe in Allāh (ﷻ) as the Only God to be worshipped.

❑ It is fitting for us to mention here the reply that Hātib gave to the Patriarch so the reader may know that these delegations had reached a level of understanding and soundness of judgement which deserve great admiration. Hātib said:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) invited the mankind to Allāh (ﷻ): the fiercest against him we the Quraish, the bitterest of his enemies were the Jews, and the closest to him were the Christians. I swear that Moses' prophecy about Jesus was just like Jesus' prophecy about Muhammad (ﷺ). Our invitation to you to accept the Qur'ān is just like your invitation to the Jews to accept the Gospel. Any prophet who encounters a people, they belong to his nation, and it is incumbent on them to obey him. You are one of those whom this Prophet (ﷺ) has encountered. We are not asking you to give up the religion of Jesus, but we are enjoining you to adhere it."

❑ These are examples of the Prophet's (ﷺ) message to the leading personalities of Christianity and their reactions towards them. In a similar manner, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent his delegations to the leaders of Zoroastrianism (Magianism), inviting them to Allāh (ﷻ) and telling them of a religion which would bring guidance to them if they followed it. Their replies were varied, ranging from harshness to politeness, from rejection to acceptance.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) wrote to Khosrau Pervez, King of Persia, saying:

"In the Name of Allāh (ﷻ), the Compassionate, the Merciful. From Muhammad (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allāh to Chosroes, the Chief of Persia. Peace be on those who follow the guidance and believe in Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger. I bear witness that there is no god except Allāh (ﷻ) alone, Who has no partner, and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and messenger. I call you to Allāh's (ﷻ) way, for I am Allāh's messenger to all the mankind to warn whoever is alive so that the word may prove true against the unbelievers. Accept Islām and you will be safe. If you reject then the sin of the Magians will be upon you."[45]

❑ Enraged, Khosrau tore the letter to pieces. Perhaps he thought that this affront to his exalted position was one of the tricks of faith caused by his ignoble defeat at the hands of the Romans. Now the Arabs had come to teach him what he knew not! He issued an order to the governor of Yemen, which was still under his control to send two strong men to arrest the person who had dared to write to him. This Khosrau Pervez was a stupid man, whose position gave him the title of King of Kings. When political paganism is supported by religious paganism it becomes blankets of darkness covered by blankets of darkness. This man displayed so much foolishness

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[45] A good Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Jarīr in his History on the authority of Yazid ibn Abī Habīb as a mursal Ḥadīth. Also Abū 'Ubayd narrated a similar version on the authority of Sa'd ibn Musayyib as *mursal*.

in running the country that his people became frustrated with him and he was murdered by his own son.

❑ When the Prophet (ﷺ) heard of what had been done to his letter by Chosroes, he said: "May Allāh (ﷻ) tear his kingdom to pieces!"[46]

❑ The odd thing was that when Chosroes' order reached the governor of Yemen, he hastened to execute it and he sent two men to Madīnah to arrest the prophet! The Prophet (ﷺ) looked at them and found them to be of the kind who are reared by kings in their palaces, just as the women in Saudi Arabia rear turkeys with attractive exteriors but worthless interiors.

When he saw their long moustaches and smooth chins he turned away from them, saying.[47] "Woe unto you! Who ordered you here?"

They replied, "Our Lord," meaning Chosroes.

❑ The deification of kings is an ancient error. When Islām spread, this system was eradicated. Now, however, its traces and characteristics have raised their heads again. The king is called "His Majesty" and he is not questioned about his actions. The laws of Allāh (ﷻ) are abolished and in their place the desires of men are established and as the king and his clan entrench themselves more and more deeply, the rights of his nation disappear one by one.

❑ Upon hearing what the two men had to say: the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered them back to the governor of Yemen, saying: "Tell him that my Lord killed his lord last night."

The Prophet (ﷺ) knew of his death before they knew. After

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[46] A sound Ḥadīth narrated by Bukhārī and also by Abū 'Ubayd on the authority of Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib as *mursal* as well as *marfu'*. It is narrated by other sources too as *mursal*. See *Al-Bidāyah wa al Nihayah*.

[47] A good Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Zayd ibn Abū Ḥabīb as *Mursal* and by Ibn Sa'd on the authority of 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abdullāh as *mursal*. It was also narrated on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ) with a weak chain. In all three narrations there is an addition which is worth quoting. "But my Lord has ordered me to leave my beard and shave moustache."

this incident, Islām took hold in the hearts of the governor of Yemen and his men and it spread rapidly among both groups in the south: Christians and Zoroastrians (Magians).

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) sent a letter to the governor of Bahrain, calling him to turn to Islām and to relinquish Zoroastrianism. The letter was taken by Al 'Ala ibn al-Hadrami,[48] who excelled in his presentation of Islām. Among the things he said was:

"O Mundhir, you have a great mind for this world so do not belittle yourself about the Hereafter. Surely this Zoroastrianism is an evil way of life. The Arabs have no respect for it nor is there any respect for revealed knowledge. They marry whom it is shameful to marry; they eat what one disdains to eat, and they worship fire in this world, which will consume them in the Hereafter. You are not devoid of intellect or keen insight: Should we deny one who never tells a lie? And one who never cheats, should we not trust him? And one who never breaks a promise-should we not have faith in him? Here is the unlettered Prophet about whom no-one can say: 'Would that he had enjoined what he had forbidden and forbidden what he had enjoined. Or 'Would that he had increased his forbearance and decreased his infliction of punishment!' Since everything about him is in accordance with the desire of those who have sense and the thought of those who think deeply."

❑ Al-Mundhir, the ruler of Bahrain, accepted Islām and offered it to his people. Some responded to the call, while others rejected and remained with their belief in Zoroastrianism or Judaism. When he sought the Prophet's (ﷺ) advice on what to do with them, the Prophet (ﷺ) wrote: "who remains in Judaism or Zoroastranism must pay *jizyah*."[49]

❑ It is a matter of great significance that the field of *da'wah*

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[48] Narrated by Al Wāqidi on the authority of Abū Ḥatmah.

[49] Ḍa'īf narrated by al-Wāqidi.

should be extended to cover all the known, populated parts of the earth. The Arabs had thought it strange that someone from among them should be called to prophethood, and they vigorously denied him.

﴾And when they see you [Muhammad] they treat you only as a jest [saying]: Is this he whom Allah sends as a messenger?﴿
(Qur'ān 25: 41)

What then would be the response of Rome and Persia, who considered the Arabs lower than they were in status, civilization, culture and politics. Would they not be quicker to scoff and reject? However, those who have been entrusted with the divine mission do not look at things in the light of the prevailing unfavourable circumstances. Their deep confidence in the supremacy and spread of their ideology makes all the obstacles thrust in their way look insignificant.

❑ If Karl Marx had remained within the confines of his thought which was an outlawed ideology that landed its supporters to prison and his ideal would have been exterminated. Nevertheless he pursued his course full of hope that some major states would adopt it as their own. If this is true of the materialists who uphold deviant thoughts, then it is no wonder that the divine messengers, armed with Revelation from the Almighty, should address letters to kings and rulers in the confidence that the truth would prevail. This is what passed through the mind of our noble Prophet (ﷺ) as he undertook the mission of guiding the scattered bedouin sometimes gently and at other times with severity. Then, at the same time, he advised the leaders of the other nations to think about this new faith and embrace it wholeheartedly.

❑ The superstitions which had corrupted the minds of the bedouin in Arabia were the same as those which had corrupted the thoughts of Chosroes, ruler of Persia. What is the difference between the fever which strikes a king and that which strikes a

pauper? The doctor will recommend the same medicine for both and will take the same precautions to prevent their spreading to others. The Prophet's (ﷺ) desire was to cure both the great and small ailments of their hearts and to give the medicine to all of them so that they might recover their health.

﴾And We reveal of the Qur'ān, that which is a healing and a mercy for believers though it increase the evildoers in nothing except ruin.﴿ (Qur'ān 17: 82)

❑ It was therefore not strange that he should gather together in his clinic both the red and the black and the rulers and the slaves. It is true that kings are hidden behind reinforced walls and are surrounded by servants, courtiers and guards as well as by riches which dazzle the eyes. Yet whose are the eyes that are dazzled by these external appearances? A doctor is concerned only about the sick body of his patient. Similarly, the Prophet looked upon his nation as ignorant people who ought to be educated, for the worldly things surrounding them made their responsibility heavier and their recompense for accepting or rejecting the guidance greater. They did not consider the powers used to defend falsehood to be long lasting, except in the way that the night seems long to the restless. Then the sun shines forth and Allāh (ﷻ) draws back the curtains of darkness with his enlightening Revelation.

❑ Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) told the messengers of the Yemeni governor when they came to him: "Tell him that my religion and dominion will reach all that Chosroes reached and will end at the clothed and the barefoot, and tell him that if he accepts Islām I shall give him what is under his rule and shall make him king of his people.[50] He was in Madīnah, appointing and deposing, but with Truth, not arrogance. Was he not in contact with the King of kings, sent as a messenger by the Lord of the heavens and earth?

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[50]Weak. Transmitted by Ibn Jarīr in his History on the authority of Yazīd ibn Abi Khubayb as *mursal*

❑ It was natural that the Arab idolaters should come to hear of these delegations and closely follow their results. They were overjoyed at first when the news of Chosroes' reaction reached them. Some of them said: "You have been spared the trouble of eliminating this man. Now Chosroes, the king of kings, is after him!" This statement spread like wildfire in Makkah and Ṭā'if. However, the days passed and Chosroes was overthrown, whereas Islām continued to penetrate hearts and homes. The news came that the delegations of Muhammad (ﷺ) were successful in some quarters and were able to spread Islām, and that its message had become established in Yemen, Oman and Bahrain. The idolaters now felt that they were being deserted and many tribes started to think of submitting to the rule of Islām, especially since the dominions of unbelief were shrinking daily in the face of the relentless waves of Revelation. However, there were many others who insisted of remaining in their *jahilīyah.*

﴾No, but we gave these and their fathers ease until life grew long for them. Do they not see how we visit the land, reducing it of its outlying parts? Can they then be the victors? "Say [Muhammad, to mankind]: I warn you only by Inspiration. But the deaf do not hear the call when they are warned.﴿ (Qur'ān 21: 44-45)

'Umrat al Qaḍā'

The seventh year was nearing its end and it was the right of the Muslims to return to Makkah to offer the rites of '*Umrah*, which they had been prevented from doing the year before. Although they had been forced to delay it a year, the gains of the *da'wah* during this period had exceeded their expectations. Now they were on their way again with their sacrificial animals to the *Ḥaram*, having a number of victories to their credit.

❑ The Makkans wanted to save face, while leaving their town for Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions to enter it in accordance with the treaty they had signed with him. Thus they spread rumours that the Muslims were suffering privation and hardships!

❑ Ibn 'Abbās narrated:

"They assembled in their Council Chamber to watch him and his Companions. When the Prophet (ﷺ) entered, he pulled the top garment over-himself, leaving his right arm bare. Then he said: "May Allāh (ﷻ) have mercy on the man who shows them this day strength from himself."[51] Then he saluted the *rukn* and began to trot, and his Companions began to trot with him until the building hid them from view.

Circumambulating the Ka'bah at this speed was show of strength on the part of the Muslims and refutation of the rumours of their weakness. It became a Sunnah after that to make the *ṭawāf* in this way.

❑ It is narrated [52] that when the Prophet (ﷺ) entered Makkah, 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah was holding his camel's head and chanting: "Give way to him, sons of unbelievers. Give way, for His messenger is all good. Lord! Verily I believe in what he says. I recognize Allāh's (ﷻ) right in accepting him!"

❑ The Muslims spent three days in Makkah, at the end of which came a delegation from the Quraish to remind them that the agreed time had elapsed and that they should leave.

In reply, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"If you let me stay, I shall arrange my wedding feast and invite you all to it."[53] They said: "We are in no need of your

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[51] Weak. Transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq, who said: "Someone whom I do not suspect told me that Ibn 'Abbās reported from the Prophet (ﷺ)." Ibn Jarīr also transmitted it from Ibn Ishāq, who transmitted it from Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Amarah from Al-Ḥakam ibn 'Uyaynah from Muqsim from Ibn 'Abbās. If it is authentic, then it is from the first chain, for Al-Hasan ibn 'Amārah is accused of fabrication, and if it is not, the first chain has a link who is not named.

[52] 'Abdullāh ibn Abi Bakr transmits from Ibn Isḥāq that 'Abdullāh ibn Abi Bakr narrated it to him as mursal. It is narrated by 'Abdul Raziq from two sources on the authority of Anas (ﷺ): the first being sound in accordance with the criteria of both Sheikhs while the second is sound according to the criteria of Muslim. The second narration is also transmitted by Al Tirmidhī and Al Nasā'ī, and the former declared it a good Ḥadīth.

[53] Weak: narrated by Ibn Ḥishām from Ibn Isḥāq without chain. The story is in Bukhārī on the authority of Al Barā and Ibn 'Umar, although their version does not contain: "If you let me..." Instead, there is: "When he had spent three days in Makkah, they ordered him to leave, and he left."

food. Go away from here." Al 'Abbās, the Prophet's (ﷺ) uncle, had offered Maymūnah bint al-Ḥārith to him in marriage. So he concluded the contract at Makkah and consummated the marriage with her at Sarf.

❑ Concerning this '*Umrah*, Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following āyah (verse):

﴾Allāh has fulfilled the vision for his messenger in every truth. You shall indeed enter the inviolable Place of Worship, if Allāh wishes, secure, [having your hair] shaved and cut, and without fear. But he knows that which you do not know, and has given you a near victory beforehand.﴿ (Qur'ān 48: 27)

The Mu'tah Expedition

The Muslims were grieved at the death of their envoy to the governor of Baṣra and the ignoble way in which he had been treated. Bubayl ibn 'Amr had tied his hands over, and pushed him then struck off his head. He was the only envoy to be killed from among the many missions sent by the Prophet (ﷺ). This was felt as a grave insult by the Muslims since envoys are not killed. They therefore determined to take retaliatory measures and teach a lesson to that sinful governor who did what he did on behalf of the Romans.

❑ The Muslims mobilized an army which can be considered big in relation to them for it comprised three thousand fighters. The Prophet (ﷺ) arranged the leaders of the army, placing Zayd ibn Hārithah at the head. He ordered that if Zayd was killed, Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib should take the lead, and if Ja'far was killed then 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāhah. The army left for the hills of Syria but the news had already preceded it to the Romans. It must have been that great awe surrounded the reputation and military might of the Muslims for the Romans began to mobilize a huge army. When the Muslims reached Ma'an they learnt that there were one hundred thousand Romans waiting for them and another hundred thousand Christian Arabs. To attack such a huge army

was a serious risk, so the Muslims spent two nights at Ma'an, deliberating what to do. Some of them thought that they should write to the Prophet (ﷺ), telling him of this strength of the enemy forces so that he could either send reinforcements or decide upon another option.

❑ However, 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah was not pleased with this idea. He urged the army to fight, saying: "O men, by Allāh (ﷻ), surely the thing you dislike is the same that you came in search of: martyrdom. We do not fight people with numbers of strength or equipment. We fight them only with this faith which Allāh (ﷻ) has honoured us with. So let's go. It can be only one of the two alternatives, both of which are good: victory or martyrdom."

❑ These stirring words had their effect; the feeling of hesitation disappeared from the ranks of the Muslims and they decided to fight, whatever the outcome. Ibn Rawāḥah was a poet of keen emotions. From the moment he had set forth he had the feeling that martyrdom was coming his way, thus he was preparing for it with his heart and tongue. Military strategy might have dictated a different course from the one he took. Nevertheless no sooner did the Muslims hear the talk of sacrifice and death on behalf of Allāh (ﷻ) than their souls filled with the love of the Hereafter, and they remembered that they had been victorious in other battles with fewer preparations than their enemy. So they advanced with confidence.

❑ Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

"I was present at Mu'tah, and when the idolaters approached we saw such large amounts of weapons, sheep, brocade, silk and gold as we had never seen before. My eyes were dazzled! Then Thābit ibn Arqam said: "Abū Ḥurairah (رضي الله عنه), perhaps you are seeing great hordes?' I said yes, and Thābit continued: 'You did not witness Badr with us. We were not victorious because of numerical strength.

Abū Ḥurairah (رضي الله عنه) was one of those who accepted Islām after Ḥudaybiyah.

❑ The two armies clashed. It would have been vain to expect that 3,000 heroes could defeat an army seventy times their size in an open field. Zayd ibn Ḥarithah fought with the Prophet's (ﷺ) banner until he fell to the spears of the enemy. Then Ja'far took up the banner and fought fiercely. Abū Dāwūd narrated the account of an eyewitness:

"I was watching Ja'far when he jumped off his chestnut horse and hamstring it. Then he fought the enemy until he was killed. All the time he was chanting:

Welcome to Paradise and its approach! How good it is, how cool its drink!

The Romans are Romans whose doom has arrived; unbelievers whose lineage is far from pure even though I receive their blows."

It is said that a Roman struck him with his sword, cutting him in two. Another version has it that he was carrying the banner in his right hand and it was cut off; he took it with his left hand and it was cut off, then he held it with his two stumps until he was killed. Ja'far had this martyrdom bestowed upon at the age of 33 years.

❑ Upon his death, 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah took the banner and advanced on his horse. When he saw the hopelessness of the situation he hesitated somewhat. Nevertheless, he convinced himself to face the same fate as his two predecessors. He chanted:

"O soul of mine, if you are not killed you will die.
Here is the love of death to whom you are exposed.

What you wished for, you are given it. If you do as they (both) did, you will be rightly guided."

Then a cousin of his approached and gave him a piece of meat, saying that he should strengthen himself with it. However, he had hardly broken off a morsel from it when he heard the clashing of swords from the far side of the field where fighting was taking place, and he said to himself, "You are yet in this world?" He flung away the food and joined the battle, fighting until he was killed.

❑ Thābit ibn Aqrad snatched up the banner which the three

leaders had kept aloft, and he shouted: "O Muslims! Select a man from among you!"

They said, "You!" He refused, however, and then they agreed upon Khālid ibn al-Walīd (ﷺ) as their leader. Thābit refused the leadership not because he was afraid of death but because he felt that there were others more competent than himself in the group. His lifting of the banner for fear that it might fall was a sign of bravery under these trying circumstances. How I wish that every man who knew the worth of the people would place them in their rightful positions and not cause the nation to bear the woes of his incompetence and egotism.

❑ Khālid took the banner and began fighting and using his skills to extricate the army from this critical predicament. To withdraw while fighting was a difficult matter, especially since Khālid did not want the Romans to know of his intention. Bukhārī narrated from Khālid: "On the day of *Mu'ta*, nine swords broke in my hand." His aim was to engage the Romans in such a way as to inflict the greatest losses possible on them without having the whole unit involved in fighting. This strategy succeeded in saving the lives of the few thousand who remained with him and the reputation of the Muslims in their first encounter with a major world power. Strangely enough, this battle exhausted the Romans and caused them great losses. In fact, some of their units were defeated and they turned and fled. Khālid was satisfied with these results and he chose to return home with his men.

❑ Anas ibn Mālik (ﷺ) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) announced the death of Zayd, Ja'far and Ibn Rawāhah to his Companions before the news reached them. He said: "Zayd took the banner and was struck down, then Ja'far took it after him and was struck down, then Ibn Rawāhah took it after him and was struck down." His eyes were flowing with tears as he continued: "Then the banner was taken by one of the swords of Allāh (ﷻ) until Allāh (ﷻ) granted them victory.[54]

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[54] A sound Ḥadīth transmitted by Bukhārī and others.

❑ Ibn Isḥāq narrated[55] that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"They were taken up to *Jannah*, as seen in sleep, on couches of gold. I saw a defeat in the couch of 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāhah and asked why that was so. I was told that the first two went forward, whereas 'Abdullāh hesitated, then went forward."

❑ It is clear from this battle without any shadow of doubt that the courage and bravery of the Muslims had reached a level no modern nation has seen. This intense spirituality instilled in them such intrepidity that for them the power of those nations which had been dominant for ages was of no consequence. Disregard for danger and love of death were not qualities confined to fighting men alone. They were an all-engulfing force which spread from the men to the children, transforming the whole nation into one of struggle and *jihād*. When the army returned from Mu'tah the youngsters welcomed it with shouts of disapproval, saying: "Runaways. You have fled from the path of Allāh (ﷻ)!"

❑ These inexperienced children considered Khālid's retreat to be flight from battle, deserving a welcome with handfuls of dust. What a strong noble generation was built by faith in the religion of truth. Look what success Islām achieved in moulding such wonderful children. Who were their fathers? Who were their mothers? How did their fathers bring them up and how did their mothers train them? The Muslim women of today are in dire need of learning these lessons.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke to his Companions of the martyred leaders of this army: "they would not be happy to be among us."[56] Yes, the station they had reached was dearer to their souls and more pleasing to their eyes than the world and all it contained. As

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[55] Recorded in the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām and other sources although with a weak chain.

[56] A sound Ḥadīth transmitted by Aḥmad with a sound chain in accordance with the criteria of Muslim. Part of it was narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Al Nasā'ī and Al-Ḥākim, who authenticated it.

for their families, they were under the protection of Allāh (ﷻ).

'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far, son of the martyred leader, said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) came to us three days after the death of Ja'far and said: "Do not weep over my brother after today, and call my brother's children to me." We were brought like chickens and then he said: "Call the barber."

The barber was brought and he shaved our heads. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said playfully: "Muhammad (ﷺ) is like our uncle Abū Ṭālib and Abdullāh is like me in features and character."

Then he took my hand, raised it and said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), be the Protector of Ja'far family after him, and bless 'Abdullāh in the dealings of his right hand."

He said this three times. My mother came and spoke to him of our orphanhood and how worried she was. So he consoled her by saying: "You are afraid for the children although I am their guardian in this world and the next?"[57]

❑ The results of Mu'tah did not appease the Muslims. The dominant tribes in the north had sought the help of the Romans against them, and so were able to escape the consequences of their aggression on Al-Ḥārith ibn 'Umayr. It was therefore still necessary to instil fear into their hearts and to make them feel that the Islāmic missions would not tolerate this kind of insult. Thus the Muslims turned their military activities to new, far-off fields.

Dhāt al Salāsil

Mu'tah took place in Jumada I of the eighth year, and not long afterwards the Muslims returned to the hills of Syria to pursue their enemies before they settled down. 'Amr ibn al Ās was sent to teach a lesson to the tribes who lived there. Being afraid of their numbers, he sought reinforcements from the Prophet (ﷺ), and as he waited for their arrival he kept close to

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[57] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Isḥāq from Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Rahmān Al Tamīmī as *mursal*.

a waterhole known as *Salāsil*. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent reinforcements comprising some of the early *muhajirīn*, including Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), and led by Abū Ubaydah ibn al Jarrah, whom he advised not to have any disputes with 'Amr.

❑ When he arrived, 'Amr claimed that he was sent as reinforcements for him, whereas 'Abū 'Ubaydah claimed that he was in charge of the troops he had brought, while 'Amr remained in command of his own troops. When 'Amr insisted on having his own way, Abū 'Ubaydah, who was a soft-hearted, man said: " 'Amr, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered me not to dispute with you. If you disobey me I will obey you."

'Amr replied: "Then I am your leader and you are my support."

Abū 'Ubaydah accepted this, 'Amr took command of the entire force and led them in prayer.

❑ 'Amr began to pursue the tribes which were allied to the Romans. He entered a number of countries, and every-time he reached a place he was told that although there was a group there, they had dispersed on hearing of his approach. On one occasion he caught up with one of these groups and a fight ensued. However, they fled and he could not get them again. Although 'Amr was able to subdue the bedouin tribes and make them disperse, he did not meet them in a decisive battle. Nevertheless, this expedition was able to remove much of the mud from the reputation of the Muslims.

❑ It happened that one cold night 'Amr had a nocturnal emission. He was afraid that if he had a bath he would fall sick, so he made *tayammum* and led the men in prayer. Some of the Companions were doubtful about the validity of this action, so they asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about it and he asked 'Amr to explain. 'Amr explained that he was afraid of the severe cold, and Allāh (ﷻ) said:

﴿And do not kill yourselves. Truly, Allāh is Merciful to you.﴾
(Qur'ān 4: 29)

The Prophet (ﷺ) laughed and did not say anything.[58] 'Amr's understanding in this matter was correct, for *tayammum* is permitted when the use of water may cause harm.

The Conquest of Makkah

After the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah the Muslims busied themselves with the spread of the *da'wah* and the presentation of the teachings of Islām to all who had understanding. Their faithfulness to the Quraish was visible to all in matters that they liked or disliked and the people could see clear evidence of that. However, the Quraish persisted in their old, stagnated policy without taking into account the momentous events which had changed conditions in the Arabian peninsula and which were about to change conditions in the world as a whole. This lack of insight led the Quraish to commit a grave act of stupidity, after which the treaty of Ḥubaybiyah was to become null and void. It happened that the Quraish, along with their allies of the Banū Bakr, attacked the Khuza'ah, who were allies of the Muslims, and killed a few of their men. The Khuza'ah sought refuge in the sanctuary of the Ka'bah, for they were not prepared for combat. Despite that, the Banū Bakr pursued them while the Quraish lent arms and assisted the Banū Bakr in their oppression.

❑ Some men of the Banū Bakr felt that they ought not to fight in the Ḥaram, and spoke to their chief, Naufal ibn Mu'āwiyah, about this, saying: "We have entered the Ḥaram, (so mind) your god, your God!"

Nevertheless, Naufal said: "There is no God today, Banū Bakr, Carry out your task!"

❑ The Khuzā'ah were terrified by what happened to them, and they sent 'Āmir ibn Sālim to the Prophet (ﷺ) to tell him the news. Upon hearing the account, the Prophet (ﷺ) promised to

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[58] Sound: transmitted by Abū Dāwūd, Al Dārquṭnī, Al-Ḥākim and Al-Bayhaqī on the authority of 'Amr Ibn al Āṣ with a sound chain.

come to their aid.[59]

❑ Afterwards the Quraish realized their mistake and sent Abū Sufyān to make amends. Upon reaching Madīnah, he went to the house of his daughter, Umm Habībah. He was about to sit upon the bed when she stopped him. Surprised, he said: "My daughter, I don't know whether it is me you prefer to the bed or whether you prefer the bed to me."

❑ "It's the bed of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)," she retorted, "and you are a polluted idolater."

❑ "By God, evil has befallen you after me."

He said. Then left, and went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and spoke to him but he received no reply.[60] Abū Sufyān then sought the help of Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and begged him to speak to the Prophet (ﷺ) on his behalf, but he refused. He went to 'Umar (ﷺ) but the latter refused also. Leaving both of them, he went to 'Alī (ﷺ). However, Alī (ﷺ) said: "By Allāh (ﷺ), Abū Sufyān, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) has decided upon a matter about which we cannot speak to him." He advised him to return whence he came, and Abū Sufyān made his way back to the Quraish to inform them of the reception he had received.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the people to prepare themselves and said that he was going to Makkah. He urged them to be serious and brisk. He supplicated: "O Allāh (ﷺ), take away the eyes and the news from the Quraish until we surprise them in their land."[61] The Muslims listened to the Prophet's (ﷺ) order and began mobilizing their forces for the expected encounter. They knew that the decisive hour between them and the Quraish was close.

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[59] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Hishām and Ibn Jarīr from Ibn Isḥāq without chain. Al Ṭabarānī supplied the chain in his *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* and *Al-Mu'jam Al Ṣaghīr*, tracing it to Maymūnah bint al Ḥārith, it is weak.

[60] Weak: narrated by Ibn Isḥāq without a chain, as transmitted by Ibn Hishām and Ibn Jarīr.

[61] Weak: narrated by Ibn Hishām without a chain. Its meaning is in the Ḥadīth of Maymūnah mentioned earlier.

❑ At this critical juncture an amazing incident occurred. A man who was among the earliest to fight in the *jihād* against the idolaters dispatched a letter to the Quraish, informing them that Muhammad (ﷺ) was about to descend on them with his forces. You have seen how keen the Muslims were to hid the plan of their attack. Was this not better for success and the minimizing of losses? Perhaps it would make the Quraish surrender without shedding blood in vain. What could writing to them mean except inciting them to fight Allāh (ﷻ) and His messenger and make extensive preparations to resist?

❑ 'Alī (ؓ) narrated:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) sent me, Al Zubayr and Al-Miqdād, saying: "Go to the meadow of Khakh and there you'll find a woman on a camel, carrying a letter. Take it from her."

We set out, our horses racing one another until we reached the meadow and there we found the woman on a camel. We asked her to hand over the letter and she replied that she had none.

We said: "Take out the letter or we'll search you!" She took it out from her braid and we brought it back to the Prophet (ﷺ). It read: "From Ḥātib ibn Abī Balta'ah to the people of Makkah, informing them of a matter concerning Allāh's Messenger. (ﷺ)."

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "What is this, Ḥātib?

He replied: "Do not be hasty with me, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). I was a man attached to the Quraish; I was an ally of theirs and not really one of them; and the *muhajirīn* who are with you have their relatives who protect for them their families and properties. Now, since I lack kinship with them, I wished to gain support from them so they might protect my relatives. I did not do it in apostasy from the faith or taking pleasure in unbelief after accepting Islām."

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'He has indeed told you the truth!"

❑ 'Umar (ؓ) exclaimed: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), let me chop off the head of this hypocrite!"

However, the prophet (ﷺ) replied: "He took part in Badr, and what do you know... maybe Allāh (ﷻ) looked at those who took part in Badr and said: Do as you please for I have forgiven you." Then Allāh's words were revealed:

﴾O you who believe! Do not choose My enemy and your enemy for friends. Do you give them friendship when they disbelieve in that truth which has come to you, driving out the messenger and you because you believe in Allāh, your Lord? If you have come forth to strive in My way and seeking My good pleasure, [do not show them friendship]. Do you show friendship to them in secret, when I am best Aware of what you hide and what you proclaim? And whoever does it among you, he has indeed strayed from the right way.﴿[62] (Qur'ān 60: 1)

❑ By this action Ḥātib had missed the straight path. It was not right of him to show love for the idolaters. Who had flaunted their disbelief, supported one another in aggression and done to the Muslims what Ḥātib was more aware of than others. Nevertheless, a great man sometimes makes a slip, and Allāh (ﷻ) is kinder to His servants than to take them to task for the moments of weakness which dim their light and cause them to stumble. The Prophet (ﷺ) inquired about the reason for this wrong-doing, and he knew that the man did not lie in the excuse he made. They were about to enter a serious battle in which they might be defeated, and then the old tribalism would rise to protect their relatives who might be in danger. Ḥātib would be without protection, so let him therefore seek favour with the Quraish to guard against the future.

❑ This is what Ḥātib thought. He was wrong, however. The idolaters did not remember alliances or kinship in their hostility to Islām and it was not right for the believers to seek their friendship, no matter if the tide was against them. They had sworn enmity to the idolaters for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ), and He had taken a pledge from them that they should sacrifice their

[62] A sound Ḥadīth, transmitted by the two Sheikhs and others.

lives and properties in the fight against them. Even if it was permissible to seek their favour, how was it possible to do so by an action which could have been seen as treason and could have done heavy damage to Islām and its adherents?

❑ Nevertheless, Ḥātib's noble past interceded for him and lessened his fall. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the Muslims to remember the man with the best virtues in him. Islām has taught us not to forget the good deeds and virtues in him. Islām has taught us not to forget the good deeds and virtues of those who may slip at times but have a long history of following the right path.

❑ Consternation spread throughout the valleys of Makkah upon the return of Abū Sufyān. Al-Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib thought it best that he and his family should accept Islām and migrate to Madīnah. On the way they met the Prophet (ﷺ) leading his army upon Makkah. Likewise, Abū Sufyān ibn al Ḥārith ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib and 'Abdullāh ibn Abi 'Umayyah left Makkah and encountered the Prophet (ﷺ) at Abwā. They were the Prophet's (ﷺ) cousins and were among those who had hurt him the most in Makkah. Thus he turned away from them when he remembered their molestation of him. Nevertheless, 'Alī (ؓ) indicated a way to his cousin, Abū Sufyān, by which he could gain acceptance from the Prophet (ﷺ).

He said; "Come up in front of him and say what the brothers of Yusuf (ؑ) had said: 'By Allāh (ﷻ),

﴾Indeed, Allāh has preferred you above us, and we were indeed sinful.﴿ (Qur'ān 12: 91)

He will not be pleased that someone should have a better answer than he."

❑ Abū Sufyān did this and the Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

﴾Have no fear this day! May Allāh forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.﴿ (Qur'ān 12: 92)

❑ Then Abū Sufyān recited some couplets of poetry, among

which he said:

"By your life, when I carry a flag for the horses of Al Lāt
To defeat the horses of Muhammad (ﷺ),
It is as if I am lost on the darkest night,
So now is the time for me to be guided,
A guide other than myself has guided me,
And someone has shown me Allāh (ﷻ) whom I had chased everywhere."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) struck him on the chest and said:
"Did you chase me everywhere?"[63]

❑ The army quickly traversed valley and hill on its march to Makkah, and at nightfall they camped at Marr Al Zahrān, not far from the city. Tents were pitched and fires were lit in every camp, totalling ten thousand men. The whole valley was lit up and Makkah remained in the dark about them, unaware of the fate that was about to befall them.

❑ Al 'Abbās was afraid that Makkah would be destroyed if a battle were to ensure, so he went out in search of some means to convince the Quraish to make peace with the Prophet (ﷺ) so that he might give them an assurance of safety. This coincided with a party of three Makkan chiefs who were out reconnoitring and gathering news. When they approached the camp they were terrified by what they saw.

Abū Sufyān, the chief of Makkah said: "I have never seen fires or a camp the like of what I am seeing tonight!"

Budayl ibn Warqa'said: "this is the Khuza'ah, by God. War has infuriated them!"

However, Abū Sufyān replied: "The Khuza'ah are too few and cowardly for these to be their fires and camp."

❑ The Muslims, in accordance with their planned strategy, were sending reconnaissance parties around them so that they might

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[63] Transmitted by Ibn Jarīr and Al-Ḥākim on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. Al-Ḥākim said it was sound in accordance with the criteria of Muslim and Al Dhahabī agreed with him. However, it is only a good Ḥadīth (*ḥasan*).

take the Quraish by surprise and force them to an unconditional surrender. One of these parties stumbled on the three Makkans and brought them under arrest to the Prophet (ﷺ). Al 'Abbās quickly took charge of the captives and declared that they were under his protection. Upon reaching the Prophet (ﷺ), he began a conversation with them which lasted most of the night, and their hearts opened to Islām, except that Abū Sufyān delayed until the morning.

They then asked him for a guarantee of the safety of the Quraish, and he said: "Whoever enters the house of Abū Sufyān is safe; whoever enters the mosque is safe; and whoever locks his door is safe."[64]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) conferred this honour on Abū Sufyān only to appease his pride, and this he did by means of something which neither harmed anyone nor caused any hardship. This is an easy price to pay to win someone's confidence. The Prophet (ﷺ), nevertheless, wanted to ensure that there were as little fighting and killing as possible. He, therefore, together with this treatment to Abū Sufyān, ordered Al 'Abbās to detain him at a pass in the valley so that he might see all the troops pass by and no thought might linger in his mind about showing resistance as the accepted chief of the Quraish.

❑ Al 'Abbās narrated:

"I took Abū Sufyān and detained him in the pass as the Prophet (ﷺ) had ordered me, and the tribes started to march past behind their banners. As each tribe passed, he asked "Who are these, 'Abbās?"

I would reply: "Sālim."

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[64] A sound Ḥadīth transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq with a muddled chain, which was clarified by Ibn Jarīr, though there is a weak link in it. However, Al-Haythami said that Al Ṭabarāni narrated it with a sound chain. Abū Dāwūd also transmitted it from Ibn Isḥāq with a different chain, but in it is a link which is not named. There is a third chain from Ibn Isḥāq which is strong, and also Muslim transmitted it on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (رضي الله عنه), except that he said "And whoever lays down his arms is safe" instead of "and whoever enters the mosque is safe."

He would say, "What have I to do with Sālim?" Then another tribe would pass and he would ask who they were. When I said "Muzayyinah," he would reply, "What do I have to do with Muzayyinah?" In the same way, all the tribes filed past and he asked the name of every one of them. As I told him, he would reply, "What do I have to do I have to do with so-and-so?" Then finally the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by with his green battalion of *Muhajirīn* and Anṣār, only their eyes visible from behind the armour. He exclaimed: "*Subhānallāh*! 'Abbās, who are these? "This is the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) with the *muhajirīn* and Anṣār," I replied.

He said, "No-one has the strength or power to match these! By Allāh (ﷻ), Abul Fadl, your nephew's kingdom has become great overnight!"

I said, "Abū Sufyān, it is prophethood.

He replied, "Yes, then.[65]

❑ Abū Sufyān entered Makkah dazed and bewildered with the feeling that behind him was a storm which, if let loose, would sweep away everything in its path. The Makkah saw the victorious army approaching slowly from afar. They gathered around their leaders, awaiting the order to fight. However, the voice of Abū Sufyān penetrated their midst loud and clear: "O people of the Quraish! Muhammad (ﷺ) has come with a force which you cannot resist. So whoever enters the house of Abū Sufyān will be safe." His wife, Hind bint 'Utbah, was appalled at these words coming from her husband.

She Jumped up and pulled his moustache, shrieking: "Kill this puffed up carcass! What a disgraceful head of state you are!"

❑ Abū Sufyān did not pay any attention to the vituperation by his wife, but repeated his warning, saying: "Woe unto you! Do

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[65] A sound Ḥadīth transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. However, Ibn Jarīr and Ṭabarānī transmitted it with a full chain from Ibn 'Abbās as explained earlier. Part of it was transmitted by Bukhārī and Ibn Jarīr on the authority of 'Urwah as *mursal*, and this is a strong support.

not let this woman deceive you about yourselves. He has come to you with a force you cannot defeat, so those who enter the house of Abū Sufyān will be safe."

❑ Some of them shouted: "May God fight you! What good can your house do to us?

He continued, "And whoever locks his door and is in the inside will be safe, and whoever enters the mosque will be safe."

The people then dispersed and fled to their homes or to the Ka'bah. Soon the "Mother of Cities" become lifeless and resigned herself to the destiny which had overtaken her.

❑ As the army continued its march to Makkah, the Prophet (ﷺ) was on his camel, a black turban on his head, and his head lowered out of abject humility to Allāh (ﷻ). He bent forward so far, the humility reflecting in his features, that his beard almost touched the back of his mount.[66] The powerful, frightening army which was marching to the centre of the *Ḥaram* and the armour-clad troops who surrounded him were waiting for one signal from himself and nothing in Makkah would remain at peace. Surely this manifest victory reminded him of a past with long chapters of how he was ejected and how he had finally returned this day as the strong conqueror. What greater honour did Allāh (ﷻ) bestow on him than to see this auspicious morning? The more he thought of these bounties, the more he bowed in humility on his mount.

❑ However, it seemed as though there were other emotions playing in the minds of some. Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah, chief of the Aws, remembered what the Makkans had done and how they had shown intransigence to Allāh (ﷻ). Then he felt the reins of power in his hands and shouted: "Today is the day of slaughter! Today the unlawful will be permitted! Today Allāh (ﷻ) will bring shame on the Quraish!"

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[66] Weak. Transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq who reported it from 'Abdullāh ibn Abū Bakr (ﷺ) as *mursal*. Al-Ḥākim and Abū Ya'la traced it to Anas and the former said it was sounding in accordance with the criteria of Muslim, and Al Dhahabī agreed with him. They are both mistaken. One of the links is 'Abdullāh ibn Bakr al-Muqaddimi, who is weak. He is not 'Abdullāh ibn Abū Bakr, who is the Sheikh of Ibn Isḥāq.

❑ These words reached the ears of the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: "No. Today is the day when the Ka'bah will be exalted.[67] Today is the day when Allāh (ﷻ) will honour the Quraish," and he ordered the banner to be taken from Sa'd and given to his son for fear that Sa'd might instigate his men to action.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) entered Makkah from its upper side and ordered the leaders of his army not to fight unless they were attacked. The contingents entered from the other quarters. Khālid ibn al-Walīd entered from lower Makkah where there was a group of Makkans who refused to surrender, having assembled at Khandamah under the leadership of 'Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl, Sahl ibn 'Amr and Safwān ibn Umayyah. However overwhelming reality clashed with their pride and dissipated it, for Khālid bore down upon them and they took to their heels.

❑ A humorous event which occurred was that Ḥamās ibn Khālid of the tribe of the Banū Bakr had prepared weapons to fight the Muslims. Whenever his wife saw him cleaning them she would ask what he was going to do with them, and he would reply that he was keeping them for Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions.

One day she said to him, "By God, I do not see them being of any use against Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions."

He replied: "By God, I hope to make one of them a slave for you."

❑ When the day of the conquest of Makkah arrived, this Hamās fought with 'Ikrimah and his band of men. Nevertheless, as soon as he saw the party of idolaters dispersing and fleeing from Khālid's army, he dejectedly made his way home and told his wife to lock the door.

❑ Surprised, she asked: "Well, what of your previous talk?"

Excusing himself, he said: "If you had seen the day of Khandaman, when Ṣafwān fled, and also 'Ikrimah, and Abū Yazīd stood like a pillar, and they were met by Muslim swords cutting through every arm and skull, leaving only moans to be

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[67] Weak: quoted by Bukhārī and others on the authority of 'Urwah as *mursal*.

heard, behind us their cries and groans. Not a word of blame would you have uttered!"

❑ Makkah surrendered, and the Prophet (ﷺ) headed for the Ancient House and circumambulated it. He broke the Idols which surrounded it, hitting them on their backs with his bow so that they fell on their faces and smashed to pieces. A while ago these stones had been hallowed gods and now they were crushed rubble. As he broke them, the Prophet of *tawhīd* recited:[68]

﴿**And Say: Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Indeed, falsehood is ever bound to vanish.**﴾ (Qur'ān 17: 81)

❑ Then he ordered the Ka'bah to be opened and saw it full of idols, two of them representing Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) and Isma'īl (ﷺ) casting lots with the divining arrows. Upon seeing this he said angrily: "May Allāh (ﷻ) fight them (the idolaters)! By Allāh (ﷻ), these two never cast lots with divining arrows!"[69] and he destroyed it all.[70]

❑ When the mosque was cleansed of all the idols, he turned to the Quraish who were awaiting his sentence on them. He held onto the two jambs of the door of the Ka'bah and said: "There is no god but Allāh (ﷻ) alone: He has fulfilled His promise, and helped His servant; and defeated the hordes by Himself." Then he asked: "O Quraish, what do you think I am going to do to you."

They replied: "Good. You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother."

❑ To which he said: "Well, I say you as Yūsuf said to his brothers: 'Have no fear today.' Go, for you are the freed ones" (*antum al tulaqa'*).[71]

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[68] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd. Also by Muslim on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ).

[69] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

[70] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Aḥmad and Al Ṭayālisī.

[71] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Isḥāq with a muddled chain. Al Ghazali mentioned it in *Al Ihyā'* on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ) without the last part " Go... However, there is a weakness in its chain.

❑ While the Prophet (ﷺ) was in the mosque, finishing off idolatry in its capital fortress, Fuḍalah ibn 'Umayr approached him with the intention of killing him at the first opportunity. The Prophet (ﷺ) looked at him and understood his purpose. Yet somehow, in the glory of the victory with which Allāh (ﷻ) had honoured him, he could not find in him to be angry with the man. He called him and asked what it was that he had on his mind. Fuḍalah replied: "I was only thinking of and remembering Allāh (ﷻ)." The Prophet (ﷺ) laughed at said: "seek Allah's forgiveness," and spoke kindly to him, and placed his hand on his chest.

The man went away, saying: "He had hardly removed his hand from my chest when I felt that there was no-one more beloved to me than he was.[72] Fuḍalah had his weaknesses in *jahilīyah*, and as he was going home he came across a woman with whom he had had an affair. Upon seeing him she invited him to sit and chat. But he replied: "No, Allāh (ﷻ) and Islām forbid it to me. If you had seen Muhammad (ﷺ) and his tribe on the day of the Conquest when the idols were smashed, you would have seen the religion of Allāh (ﷻ) becoming manifest and the face of idolatry being smothered in darkness."

❑ Bilāl (ﷺ) climbed, on the roof of the Ka'bah and shouted the call to prayer while everyone in Makkah listened to this new call as if they were in a dream. The words rang through the air, striking terror into the hearts of the devils who could find no alternative but to flee from its piercing sound or submit themselves to Islām: "Allāh (ﷻ) is the Greatest; Allāh (ﷻ) is the Greatest; Allāh (ﷻ) is the Greatest; Allāh (ﷻ) is the Greatest."

❑ These emphatic cries reminded the people of their ultimate goal in life and their true return after death. How many a small goal had caused people to deviate and to run wild as the beasts upon the land, and how they had diverted their attention and caused them to be drowned in the pursuit of rubbish. These

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[72] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Hishām with a muddled chain.

goals had so dominated their feelings that grief would kill them when they were deprived of them and joy would kill them when they were satisfied. Why should people make fools of themselves by losing themselves in these trivialities? The voice of truth has reached them from beneath these thick layers and instilled into their being the thought of that which they have forgotten: the exaltation of the Master of this universe and the Lord of all the worlds.

❑ "I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ). I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ). All the associates have fallen. For too long the mankind has submitted to fancy, taken pride in the worthless, hoped for good in things which could not benefit them, and sought help from those who could not ward off from themselves a fly's attack. Why all this wandering in the blind alleys? If the fools associate some of Allāh's creation with Him as partners or deified them, then the Muslims recognize no-one but Allāh (ﷻ) as Sovereign and see no other but Him as refuge. Pure monotheism is that stubborn path which leads to the goal that they have set for themselves. Who is to be the ideal? Who is to be the guide on this path? And who is to be the vanguard to pave the way for others?

❑ The Mu'adhdhin goes on to give the answer: "I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is Allāh's Messenger, I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is Allāh's Messenger." The life of this noble man is the perfect ideal for every human being who wishes to live a sound life. Muhammad (ﷺ) was the man who sketched with his virtuous lifestyle, the unique path for all those who embrace the truth and live for it. The call to prayer warns all intelligent people to do what is good and become active for the pleasure of their Master. It first urges the people to perform a simple act of worship.

❑ "Come to prayer; Come to prayer." These prayers are the moments of contemplation about the worth of this world; these are the moments of return when people stray from the straight path; they are the moments of submission and humility to Allāh (ﷻ) whenever haste overtakes people, egotism invades their

thoughts, and they look at themselves as if they were little gods; these are the moments of recuperation and inspiration. How much in need people are inspite of their haughty airs, of someone to inspire them with uprightness so that they do not behave foolishly, one who will give them strength so that they do not feel themselves incapable and weak. The call to prayer finally urges people to keep frustration at bay in all their affairs. Frustration comes when one's efforts go to waste, when one's actions do not bring results because of some mistake, whether it is a mistake in the performance of an act or in its purpose. It warns of this frustration when it says: "Come to success, come to success." The day an action comes from person and is correct in form and intention, that person will attain success, even if it happens to be an action which pertains to this world alone. Did Allāh (ﷻ) not teach His Prophet (ﷺ) to make all his affairs of life, let alone his rituals and worship, purely for the pleasure of Allāh (ﷻ)?

﴾**Indeed, Say: my worship, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the Worlds. He has no partner. Thus am I commanded, and I am first of those who surrender [to Him].**﴿ (Qur'ān 6: 162-163)

The only way to do this is by subjugating all other goals to Allāh (ﷻ) and by always maintaining a pure monotheism. Thus the call to prayer returns once again to the Ultimate Goal and the method: "Allāh (ﷻ) is the Greatest, Allāh (ﷻ) is the Greatest. There is no god but Allāh (ﷻ)."

❑ The words of the *adhān* represent the glaring highlight of a comprehensive message of reform. This is why, according to the authentic traditions, a Muslim should say the following prayer upon hearing it: "O Allāh (ﷻ), Lord of this complete call and established prayer, grant Muhammad (ﷺ) the intercession and virtue and allot him the exalted status which You promised him. Surely You do not betray your promises."[73]

❑ On the day of this conquest memories may take us back to some men who had not witnessed this manifest victory, or heard

[73] *Saḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī and others without the last part "Surely you do not betray Your promises", which is transmitted by Al-Bayhaqī alone and is not authentic.

the voice of Bilāl (ﷺ) ringing above the Ka'ba with the slogan of *tawhīd*, or seen the idols overturned with their faces in the dust, or seen their former worshippers surrendering and turning towards Islām. They were killed or died during the long struggle between belief and unbelief. The victory whose fruits were being reaped today by the living owed a great deal to those who were dead and their reward was guaranteed by One who does not wrong anyone the weight of an atom. It is not necessary for every soldier to witness the final results of the struggle between truth and falsehood. Some may live through the early stages, whereas others may die in a temporary defeat as happened to Ḥamzah, chief of the martyrs, and those with him.

❑ The Qur'ān points out the object of reliance is the complete accounting in the Hereafter and not in this world. In that life both the believers and the unbelievers will be given their full due.

﴾Then have patience. Indeed, the promise of Allāh is true. And whether we let you see a part of that which We promise them, or [whether] We cause you to die, still to us will they be brought back.﴿
(Qur'ān 40: 77)

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) entered Makkah in Ramaḍān and remained the whole month, shortening his prayers. He did not fast for more than fifteen days though he had left Madīna while fasting. However, he and his Companions had broken it on the way.[74]

❑ When matters settled down, he began to accept the people's allegiance to Islām.[75] The old and the young, men and women came when they could.[76] The women's pledge to the Prophet (ﷺ) was done verbally, not by shaking hands, for 'Ā'ishah

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[74] His shortening of the prayers is transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, who said: "the Prophet (ﷺ) spent nineteen days in Makkah, praying two *rak'ats*. His not fasting is transmitted by the two Sheikhs on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

[75] Good: transmitted by Aḥmad on the authority of Al Aswad ibn Khalaf.

[76] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Jarīr without a chain or on the authority of Qatādah with a weak chain.

reported: " No, by Allāh (ﷻ), the hand of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) never touched the hand of a woman.[77] Thus the people of Makkah entered into Islām. There were a few, however, who remained in doubt and *jahilīyah*, clinging to idols and consulting oracles. These were left for time to cure: once their protected paganism had gone, then these superstitions would vanish automatically.

❑ The conquest of Makkah came after a swift blow, and the strategy of the Muslims succeeded in keeping the news from reaching the Quraish so that they were surprised in their own homes and found no alternative but to surrender unconditionally without being able to resist or seek reinforcements. The eyes of the Arabs throughout the peninsula were opened in the face of the reality, and they began to think that victory was tied to the banners of Islām and could not be separated from it.

The Battle of Ḥunayn

This triumph, nevertheless, had its repercussions among the major tribes who lived near Makkah, foremost among whom were the Hawāzin and Thaqīf, their metropolis being Ṭā'if which was the largest city after Makkah and Madīnah in the Arabian peninsula. The chiefs of these tribes appointed Mālik ibn 'Awf, the chief of the Hawāzin, as their leader, and decided to march upon the Muslims before the pillars of their conquest were strengthened and before they moved towards dismantling the remaining bulwarks of the retreating paganism. Mālik ibn 'Awf was a brave and daring man. However, he was not a deep thinker and seldom asked others for advice. He ordered his men, as they were leaving for the confrontation, to bring along with them their women, children and wealth, so that every man might be aware of them behind him as he fought and not flee from the battlefield.

Durayd ibn Ṣummah, an experienced warrior, objected to this, saying: "Will anything stop the defeated from fleeing. If

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[77] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs and others.

you are victorious, all you need are men with swords and spears, and if you are defeated you will be disgraced in the matter of your families and wealth."

Mālik scoffed at his idea, however, and insisted on carrying out his plan.

❑ The Muslims learnt of the march of their enemy and sent spies to find out their numbers and equipment.

Abū Dāwūd narrated that a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said:

"I went ahead of you and climbed Mount such-and-such, and there I saw the Hawāzin gathered with all their men, women, cattle and property near Ḥunayn."

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) smiled and said: "That will be booty for the Muslims tomorrow, *Inshāllah*."[78]

❑ The ease with which Makkah was conquered led the vast majority of Muslims to feel that *jahilīyah* was breathing its last and would never again put up any resistance worth mentioning. The opinion of the new Muslims that nothing could stand in their way all contributed to the confident march of the army without a thought for what they might encounter. And why should they? While they were few in number they were realizing amazing victories, and now they were in such great numbers as they had never been before.

❑ It is narrated that Abū Bakr (ﷺ), upon looking at the army, said: "We shall never be defeated today owing to smallness in numbers." This was because the Muslims had reached twelve thousand with the addition of those who joined them from Makkah.

Defeat

The confident army marched until they reached the valley of

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[78] *Saḥīḥ*: transmitted by Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Suhayl Ibn Al-Hawzaliyah with a sound chain.

Ḥunayn. However, Mālik and his men had already occupied its passes and were scattered in all the fortified corners, prepared to receive the Muslims. The huge crowds passed on to the valley, unaware of what was hidden therein. It was a hollow valley, sloping downwards, and the riders felt as though they were descending into a pit. When the troops were gathered within its confines they were suddenly shocked to see a hail of arrows falling upon them from the hideouts above them. The darkness of the early morning was still clinging to the horizon as this took place, and a wave of terror swept through the ranks and they turned and fled.

❑ Taking advantage of this confusion, Mālik's men attacked the Muslims with their cavalry, and the chiefs of the Quraish looked on at the retreating army with a sense of gratification and pleasure. Disbelief in Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) was renewed in some of them, and Abū Sufyān said: "Their defeat will not end until they reach the seal!" This was not surprising, for the arrows with which he had consulted the oracles in his *jahilīyah* were still in his quiver!

Kildah ibn al-Junayd exclaimed: Indeed! Today the magic is broken!" Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah, though still a polytheist, paid to him in reply: "Shut up! May God split you mouth! By God, I should prefer a man from the Quraish to defeat me than a man from the Hawāzin."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) was angered by this flight. He shouted: "Where to, men? Come to me! I am the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ); I am Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh!" No-one responded to him, the camels jumped onto one another as their riders turned with them to flee.[79] Then the Prophet (ﷺ) spied a man from the Hawāzin on a red Camel, who was holding a black flag on the tip of a long spear, and behind him were the Hawāzin. Whenever he caught any of the fleeing Muslims he pierced him

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[79] *Saḥīḥ*: transmitted by Ibn Hishām and Ibn Jarīr from Isḥāq with a sound chain from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh.

with his spear, and whenever he missed he would raise his hand to those behind him to give chase.

❑ Those who led this shameful display were the freed Makkans and the bedouin mob. The Prophet (ﷺ) stood with complete composure, planning a strategy to save the reputation and future of Islām. Surrounding him was a group of early *muhajirīn* and members of his household. So he ordered Al-'Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, who had a resonant voice, to shout: "O Anṣār! You who took the pledge at Ḥudaybiyah!"[80] Truth guided him to call those who had ideology and those who had laid down their lives for a cause, for it was only by means of such people that the ideology could succeed and emerge from a crisis. As for those masses of people who thought only of this world and strove for booty, nothing could be achieved by them nor could they remain steadfast.

Rally and Victory

Despite the noise caused by the confusion at the beginning of the battle, Al 'Abbās's cries rang out and reached the ears of the men, who were in a daze at the tide of events, and they began to struggle to reach the source of the voice. When one of them wanted to guide his camel in that direction he found it impossible to do because of the pressure of those in flight. He could see no alternative but to throw off his armour, take up his sword and shield and head for the voice. Soon a number of men were gathered around the Prophet (ﷺ), nearly one hundred. He then faced the idolaters with them and a fierce battle ensued. 'Alī (ﷺ) and one of the Anṣār went for the standard-bearer from the Hawāzin. 'Alī (ﷺ) hamstring the camel and it fell on its hindquarters, enabling the Anṣāri to pull the man off its back and kill him.

❑ All this time, the Prophet (ﷺ) on his mule was shouting: "I am the Prophet of Allāh (ﷺ) and this the truth; I am the son of

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[80] *Saḥīḥ*: transmitted by Ibn Isḥāq with a sound chain from Al-'Abbās. Muslim has a similar version.

'Abdul Muṭṭalib.[81] He was also supplicating: "Allāh (ﷻ), send down Your help.[82] The *muhajirīn* and Anṣār were now fully engaged with the Hawāzin and the Thaqīf. Al-'Abbās narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) on his mule looked at the battle and said, "Now the battle is raging." Then he picked up some pebbles and threw them into the enemies' faces, saying, "They are defeated, by the Lord of Muhammad (ﷺ)," and it was not long before the Thaqīf and their allies had turned their backs in flight.

❑ About this battle Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following:

﴾Allāh has given you victory in many fields, and on the Day of Ḥunayn, when you exulted in your multitude, it was of no avail to you, and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you; then you turned back in flight. Then Allāh sent His peace of reassurance down upon His messenger and upon the believers, sent down hosts you could not see, and punished those who disbelieved. Such is the reward of disbelievers.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 25-26)

❑ Some of the fleeing men sought refuge in a place called Awtas, and the Prophet (ﷺ) sent Abū 'Āmir al Ash'ari in pursuit of them. He fought them until he was killed, and after him his nephew, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī took up the banner and continued to fight the enemy until he was able to rout them.[83] Mālik and his men were forced to flee until they reached Ṭā'if and took shelter in their fortress, leaving behind booty of tremendous value. Mālik, as you learnt, had gone out to battle, taking with him all the women and possessions of his tribe. What was left on the battlefield amounted to twenty-four thousand camels, more than forty-thousand sheep and four thousand uqiyah of silver, beside six thousand captives.

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[81] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs from Al-Bara ibn 'Azib.

[82] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Muslim alone.

[83] Sound: mentioned by Ibn Isḥāq without a chain, although its meaning is in Bukhārī and Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Abū Mūsā al Ash'ārī.

Booty

The Prophet (ﷺ) disliked distributing this booty to the people, so he waited in the hope that the enemy would come back repentant and retrieve all they had lost. Although he waited ten nights, no-one came.[84] So he began to silence the desirous from among the tribal chiefs and the Makkah nobles by distributing the wealth, firstly to those whose hearts were to be reconciled. They were given abundant shares.

❑ Abū Sufyān was given a hundred camels and forty uqiyah of silver. He asked: "What about my son, Mu'āwiyah?" He was given a similar share for his son. Again he asked: "What about my son, Yazīd?" and he was given a similar amount for his son, Yazīd.[85]

❑ The tribal chiefs raced one another to take what they could, and the news spread that the Prophet (ﷺ) was giving away as one who had no fear of poverty.

The people crowded around him, seeking more wealth, and the bedouin threw themselves at him, saying: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), divide our booty among us.

They forced him against a tree and his robe was snatched away!

He said: "O people, give me back my robe. By Him in Whose hands is my life, if I had for you in cattle the number of trees in Tihamah, I should distribute it among you, and then you would not find me a miser or a coward or a liar!" He then stood at the side of a camel and took a tuft of hair from its hump. Holding it up, he said: "O people! By Allāh (ﷻ), I have no right in your booty or in this tuft of hair except a fifth, and the fifth will be given back to you!"[86]

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[84] Sound: narrated by Bukhārī.

[85] Mentioned by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. Ibn Jarīr transmitted it from him on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Bakr as *mursal*. The Prophet's (ﷺ) giving to those whose hearts were to be reconciled, including Abū Sufyān, is correct and transmitted by Muslim.

[86] *Saḥīḥ*: transmitted by Aḥmad and Al Bayhaqī with a good chain on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr, also Bukhārī on the authority of Jubayr ibn Mat'am up to where he said "or a liar". The rest is transmitted by Al-Ḥākim on the authority of 'Ubādah Ibn al Ṣāmit and by Al-Bayhaqī on the authority of 'Umar ibn 'Ibsah.

❑ Their eyes almost fell out of their sockets in pursuit of worldly gain! These bedouin, freedmen and tribal chiefs were of no support to Islām in its early days of difficulties. In fact, they were the serious obstacles in its path until they were pulverized under the pickaxes of the true believers, who desired the reward of the Hereafter and preferred what Allāh (ﷻ) had in store for them. Today, having announced their conversion to Islām, they were demanding that the Prophet should open up for them the treasures of the earth, although he swore that he was not retaining anything for himself. Had he in his possession that valley full of wealth, he would have distributed it all to them.

❑ The truth is that the Prophet (ﷺ), by his magnanimity, cleared the way for greed and recklessness to display themselves in those hearts he was trying to win over to Islām. If, instead, he had punished them for their cowardice at Ḥunayn, it would have been a different story. Aḥmad transmitted the following incident.[87]

Abū Ṭalḥah, one of the few warriors of Islām, saw Umm Sulaym with a dagger.

He asked what it was for, and she replied: "If any of the idolaters approaches me, I'll rip open his stomach." This was in the Battle of Ḥunayn.

Abū Ṭalḥah said to the Prophet (ﷺ): "Do you hear what Umm Sulaym is saying?"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) laughed, and Umm Sulaym said: Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), after that I shall kill the freedmen who caused you to be defeated!"

❑ He replied: "Allāh (ﷻ) has taken good care of them, Umm Sulaym!"

❑ The surprising thing is that those who fled at the time of fear were the same who returned in droves at the time of greed. Nevertheless, the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to be lenient with them and forget their past in order to win them over. So what did he

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[87] His chain is *Ṣaḥīḥ* in accordance with the criteria of Muslim.

do? In the world there are many people who are led to the truth by their bellies, not by their intellects. Just as animals are guided on their path by a bundle of hay to which they keep stretching out their mouths until they arrive safely in their pens, so also do these people need all sorts of enticements to lead them to faith.

❑ Anas (ﷺ) narrated:

"I was walking with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), who was wearing a Najrāni cloak with roughly-finished seams. A bedouin Arab came up and pulled at him so hard that when I looked at the top of the Prophet's (ﷺ) shoulder. I could see the marks of the seam which were caused by the pulling. He said: "Order a portion of Allāh's (ﷻ) wealth with you to be given to me." He turned to the bedouin and laughed, then he ordered that he be given something.[88]

❑ That bedouin was not impressed by fine logic or good manners as much as was by a gift which filled his pockets and satisfied his desires. Expressing this point of view, Safwān ibn Umayyah said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) did not stop giving me from the spoils of Ḥunayn until he changed from being the most hateful of creation in my sight to the most loved of them all.[89]

The Wisdom of the Distribution

This far-sighted policy was not understood at first and it was criticized by some. There were believers who thought that they were being slighted by this deprivation and their families neglected. Bukhārī transmitted on the authority of 'Amr ibn Taghlib:

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) gave to one set of people and withheld from others. Perhaps they reproached him for this, and he said: "I gave to some people because I feared their impatience and anxiety, whereas others I left to the goodness and richness which Allāh (ﷻ) had placed in their hearts, among

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[88] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Transmitted by the two Sheikhs.

[89] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Muslim, Tirmidhī and Aḥmad on the authority of Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib.

them being 'Amr ibn Taghlib."

Continuing, 'Amr said: "I should not like to exchange these words of the Prophet (ﷺ) for all the riches in the world."

Thus this testimonial which made the man so content was weightier for him than the most valuable gifts.

❑ Those who felt the burden of this policy the most were the Anṣār. They were all deprived of the spoils of Ḥunayn in spite of the fact that they were the ones summoned at the hour of need, and they fought alongside the Prophet (ﷺ) until their flight turned into victory. Now here they were, seeing the fugitives returning with their hands full whereas they were given nothing at all.

❑ Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī reported:

"When the Prophet (ﷺ) acquired the spoils after Ḥunayn, he distributed them to the new converts from the Quraish and all the Arabs except the Anṣār, who did not receive a single thing.

This group of Anṣār felt so frustrated that one of them said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), Allāh's Messenger has reunited with his people."

Then Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), this group of Anṣār have become angry with you."

When he asked why, Sa'd replied: "Because you distributed the spoils to your people and the rest of the Arabs but you did not give them anything."

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: "And what is your position in this regard?"

Sa'd" said: "I am only a man from my tribe."

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said: "Gather your people for me in this enclosure, and when they are assembled, let me know."

❑ Sa'd left and called his people, and gathered them in the enclosure. When all the Anṣār had assembled, he went to inform the Prophet (ﷺ). The latter came and, standing among them, he started to speak by praising Allāh (ﷻ).

Then he said: "O Anṣār! Did I not come to you and find you

going astray, then Allāh (ﷻ) guided you; and in need, then Allāh (ﷻ) enriched you; and enemies to one another, then Allāh (ﷻ) united your hearts?" They all shouted yes, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Aren't you going to answer, O Anṣār?

They said: "And what can we say? What answer should we give, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)? The act of kindness is Allāh's and His messenger's."

He said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), if you wished you could have said and you would have spoken the truth you came to us as a fugitive, and we gave you refuge; as a dependant, and we assisted you; as one in fear, and we gave you safety; and as a reject, and we helped you."

They said: "The favour is Allāh's and His messenger's."

He said: "Were you angry because of the worldly trifles which I gave to the new Muslims where by to win their hearts, I left to you the share that Allāh (ﷻ) gave to you of Islām? Will it not please you, then, that the people should go their mounts with the sheep and camels while you go to your mounts with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)? By Him in Whose hands is my life, if the people go one way and the Anṣār go another, I should go the way of the Anṣār. If it were not for the Hijrah, I should have been a man from among the Anṣār. O Allāh (ﷻ), have mercy on the Anṣār, and the children of the Anṣār, and the children of the Anṣār's children."

Upon this, the whole gathering wept until their beards were drenched, and they said: "We are pleased with Allāh (ﷻ) as Lord and His Messenger (ﷺ) as our share." He left and they dispersed.[90]

Return of the Hawāzin Delegation

After the distribution of the booty, a delegation from the Hawāzin came to accept Islām and seek the return of their

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[90] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Aḥmad, Ibn Hishām and Ibn Jarīr from Ibn Isḥāq with a sound chain on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī. The story is mentioned by Bukhārī in an abridged form.

people and wealth.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said to them: " I have only what you see. And indeed, the speech which most prefer is the most truthful. So which is dearer to you, your children and women or your wealth?"

They replied: "We do not equate anything with kith and kin."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) then stood up among the Muslims, praised Allāh (ﷻ) as He (ﷻ) should be praised, and then he said: "Those brothers of yours have come repentant, and I see it fitting to give them back their kith and kin. So whoever finds it agreeable may do so, and whoever wishes to retain his share until we give him a substitute from the first spoils that Allāh (ﷻ) sends our way may do so."

Some people said: "It is agreeable to us, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)!"

However, he replied: "We do not know who has given permission from who has not. So go back until your deputies raise your affair with us." The people went back and spoke to their deputies, who came to the Prophet (ﷺ), saying that they had all found it agreeable and had given permission.[91]

The Siege of Ṭā'if

The Thaqīf, having retreated in defeat from Ḥunayn and Awṭās, entered their fortress and prepared themselves for a long siege. From this the Muslims learnt that they still insisted on remaining in their *jahilīyah*, and the losses which they had sustained had not broken their determination. They therefore decided to march upon them and lay siege to their city, a method of war with which they were very familiar because they had done it before and understood the best means of attack and defence. The Prophet (ﷺ) led his army until they were close to Ṭā'if and then he camped around it. The Thaqīf started to shoot arrows from their fortress and they hit a number of Muslims. This forced the latter to draw back their lines so that they would

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[91] *Saḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of Marwān, Al-Miswar and Ibn Makhramah together.

not be targets for the arrows.

❑ It appears that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not urge his men to invade the fortress and force out the occupants, as he had done with the Jews. He was hoping for good in them, so he directed the battle around them from restricted positions and with few losses, and this continued for fifteen days. Then it occurred to him that he should leave them alone and he voiced this to the Muslims. Although at first they wanted to prolong the siege until the city opened up to them, eventually they came round to his opinion.

❑ It is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) consulted Nawfal ibn Muʻāwiyah on the matter of the siege, and he replied that they were like a fox in a hole: if one kept watch over it, one would be able to take it; but if one went away, it would do him no harm.[92] So the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered ʻUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) to announce their departure to the men.[93]

On their way back, they said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), the arrows of the Thaqīf burnt us, so call on Allāh (ﷻ) to punish them."

He said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), guide the Thaqīf.[94] The Thaqīf did not remain for long in their idolatry. Only a few months had elapsed after the siege when they sent a delegation to Madīnah to inform the Prophet (ﷺ) of their desire to enter Islām.

To the Land of the Hijrah

The Muslims returned from Ṭā'if to Makkah, not to settle there after Allāh (ﷻ) had conquered it for them, but to regulate its affairs before proceeding to their permanent place of Hijrah. Their ties with Madīnah had become so strong and deep that they were not to be displaced by an old homeland or fond memories. It is

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[92] Weak: transmitted by Al-Wāqidī.

[93] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq.

[94] Weak: transmitted by Al Tirmidhī from Abul Zubayr from Jābir. He said it was *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* Zubayr is a forger.

narrated that when Makkah was conquered and the Prophet (ﷺ) entered it, he stood on Mount *Safā*, making supplications.

The Anṣār, who surrounded him, whispered to one another: "Do you think that the Prophet (ﷺ) will remain in Makkah now that Allāh (ﷻ) has brought him back to his homeland?" When he had finished his supplication he asked what it was that they were saying, and they replied, nothing. However, he insisted that they should tell him.

When they did, he said: "Allāh (ﷻ) forbid! My home is your home, and my place of death is your place of death."[95]

❑ Now, since the people of Makkah were new to Islām and did not have much knowledge of its laws and teachings, the Prophet (ﷺ) left Mu'ādh ibn Jabal with them to teach them the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ), [96] and he made 'Attāb ibn Usayyid *amīr* of Makkah,[97] though he was only 20 years old.

❑ 'Attāb was a quick-witted youth who was also brave and contented. He was given stipend of one dirham every day from the treasury and he was satisfied with it. He delivered a speech to the people in which he said: "O people! May Allāh (ﷻ) cause to starve the man who goes hungry with one dirham. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) has provided me one dirham a day so I have no need of anyone."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) reached Madīnah in the last month of the eighth year. What a difference there was in his arrival this time after the manifest victory and his arrival eight years ago when he made the Hijrah to this noble country. He had come to it as a

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[95] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted in this manner by Ibn Hishām without a chain, although Muslim and others supplied the chain linking it to Abū Hurairah (ؓ). Thus it is not permissible to introduce it with the words: "It is narrated."

[96] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without chain. Al-Ḥākim transmitted it from 'Urwah as *mursal* and its chain is also weak. Ibn 'Abdul Barr transmits with a sound chain that the Prophet (ﷺ) sent Mu'adh to Yemen in the year of the conquest of Makkah. If all is correct then he would have been sent to Yemen after being appointed to stay in Makkah. However, Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

[97] Up to here the Ḥadīth is *ḥasan*. The rest of the Ḥadīth, however, does not have strong support though it is famous.

fugitive seeking refuge and as a stranger in search of friendship. The residents had honoured him and given him a comfortable abode; they had helped him and followed the light which Allāh (ﷻ) had revealed to him;

They had considered the enmity of the people as insignificant for his cause. Now he was re-entering Madīnah, Makkah having submitted to him and thrown its pride and *jahilīyah* at his feet, and he having raised its status with Islām and forgiven it of its previous sin.

﴾Truly! He who wards off [evil] and endures [finds favour]; for indeed Allāh does not lose the wages of the kindly.﴿ (Qur'ān 12: 90)

The Attitude of the Hypocrites

The worthy action for those to take who had doubts about the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ) would have been to examine these clear signs carefully and accept the truth. However, vile souls only increase in evil and stubborness every time their enemies increase in success and inspiration. What one may think to be a reason for their acceptance may very well be the cause of their rejection. It was not strange, therefore, that the Prophet (ﷺ) should return to Madīnah to find the heart of the hypocrites enclosed upon themselves while their faces were smiling at the returning victor. It was the same for all the clan chiefs, whose power had dwindled with the spread of Islām, and most of the bedouin Arabs, who frolicked in the desert like animals, hardly understanding speech.

❑ There was another matter, too, which gave impetus to the vagaries of the hypocrites and their evil machinations against Islām and its Prophet (ﷺ). They were well aware of the enmity which had sprung up between the Muslims and the Romans and the potential dangers which such a conflict could cause. In those days the Arabs used to look at the Roman Empire in the same way as the people of Africa look today at Europe and the United

States: they are an invincible power not to be provoked. Even if the Romans did hold such a fearful position, Muhammad (ﷺ) was not one to be scared of any power on earth, as everyone knew well from his character. He had pressed on with his mission, melting away all the obstacles in his way, erasing paganism, exiling Judaism, and he had stood up confidently to the challenge of Rome.

❑ The hypocrites were overjoyed at this new conflict and they thought that grave of Islām would be dug in it. Thus when the Prophet (ﷺ) announced that he was marching to Tabūk, a group of hypocrites assembled, and, pointing to the Muslims, scoffingly remarked: "Do you think a clash with the Romans is like the Arabs fighting one another? By God, we can see tomorrow all tied up with ropes!"

Tabūk

The Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to strengthen the ties between Islām and Christianity, though not at the expense of Islām. Thus he did not accept any bargaining over the issue of whether his missionaries should be left free to present their message to the mankind with the option of their accepting it or rejecting it. Islām strongly opposed the killing of its missionaries and the erection of barriers in the way of their work. Moreover, the Romans in Syria, Iraq, Egypt and other lands were invaders who had no links with the original inhabitants except by forceful occupation and moral conquest. Therefore, those who wished to object to Islām's march towards the north should first ask themselves why they remained silent at the Romans' march to the south, and in what manner they governed the lands which they conquered.

❑ An unbiased evaluation would remove the doubts about the Prophet's (ﷺ) intentions. His proposal was that the different ideologies should explain themselves in an open environment, and let the people decide which of these they chose to follow, a choice free from any form of constraint or coercion. However,

this demand was met with armed rejection. Neither did the Roman Empire open the door of its trap for the many victims who were struggling within its confines, nor did the Roman Church welcome this new change of atmosphere. In our book Prejudice and Tolerance between Islām and Christianity, we referred to the Battle of Tabūk: "The Church could not bear to have by its side another opinion which disagreed with it on trivial matters."

How could it, then, allow a religion to exist which denied the authority of its personages? This new religion held that there were no intermediaries between people and god, and it rejected the doctrine of the atonement, which was the basis of Christianity, because it considered reward and punishment to be based on people's actions alone.

❑ The Romans sought to strike so hard at Islām in the north of the peninsula that it would retreat to whence it came, and to close its frontiers so that it might not slip through again. Thereafter the Church would exercise so much control over people's consciences that whenever its bells tolled, there would be no *mu'adhdhin* to muffle its sound with the cries of *tawhīd*, the calls to prayer and success. The history of Christianity ever since it came to power underscores the hostile intentions of its theologians and priests.

❑ The news of this mobilization came to the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madīnah, and he saw no way out but to call up the Muslims for *jihād* against this planned aggression. The preparations for this confrontation with the Romans came in days of drought and famine, and demanded great effort and huge expense. A fight against the Romans was not like a fight against a tribe of few men and resources. It was, in fact, a bitter struggle with an empire whose power was spread over several continents and which had vast resources of men and wealth at its disposal.

❑ The people of ideology, however, do not recoil at difficulties, and to keep silent at the Christians' challenge to this *dīn* could only be considered as suicidal and destructive. Let the Muslims,

therefore, exert themselves and face the future with all its demands and sacrifices. The army that was so mobilized came to be known as the Army of Hardship because of the testing circumstances of its mobilization. Even the āyāt (verses) of the Qur'ān which were revealed in connection with this battle were the longest to be revealed about any battle between the Muslims and their enemies. The āyāt began by shipping up the zeal to repel the impending attack of Christianity on Islām. They made the Muslims realize the consequences of falling short in the execution of this duty, and made them understand that Allāh (ﷻ) would not accept an atom's weight of negligence in protecting His *dīn* and helping His Prophet. Withdrawal in the face of grave difficulties without fighting the Romans would be backsliding towards apostasy and hypocrisy.

﴾O you who believe! What ails you that when it is said to you: go forth in the way of Allāh, you are bowed down to the ground with heaviness. Do you take pleasure in the life of the world rather than in the Hereafter? The comfort of the life of the world is but little in comparison to the Hereafter. If you do not go forth He will afflict you with a painful doom, and will choose other people instead of you. You cannot harm Him at all. Allāh is Able to do all things.﴿
(Qur'ān 9: 38-39)

❑ The āyāt (verses) went on to speak sternly, exposing the hypocrites and the waverers, humiliating those who sought ease and comfort as well as those who preferred the shelter of their homes and fields to the heat of the desert, the difficulties of travel and the dangers of war.

Those who remained at home rejoiced at sitting idle behind the back of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and were averse to striving with their wealth and their lives in Allāh's way. And they said:

﴾Do not go out in the heat! Say: the heat of hell is more intense, if they but understood.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 81)

❑ Sūrah al Taubah contains many pages of comments on the Army of Hardship. Perhaps the most distinctive thing about the Qur'ānic approach to this *jihād* was that it did not weary of commending those who took part in it and criticizing those who failed to do so. No wonder, for it was imperative for the future of Islām to define clearly its stance as regards Christianity. There was no alternative for the Muslims but to stand firm in the face of the caprices of the intolerant Church, otherwise they would have been consumed by its fire and no trace would have been left of their religion. This decision had the most positive results; the Muslims left with such an enormous contingent as they had never before mobilized, and they headed for the north where the Roman armies lay.

❑ In the course of these preparations the secrets of the hearts were laid bare, clearly showing just how much sincerity, magnanimity and readiness they contained. There were the rich who donated their riches for the mobilization of the army, whether in the form of mounts, weapons or provisions.

Among them was 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (ﷺ), who contributed so much that the Prophet (ﷺ) was greatly pleased with him, and said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), be pleased with 'Uthmān (ﷺ) for I am pleased with him."[98]

There were the poor who gave themselves up for this *jihād* in the way of Allāh (ﷻ), and on finding that the means were not available to take them to the battlefield, their eyes flooded with tears at this privation. It is narrated that 'Atiyah ibn Yazīd stood praying during the night, offering long *tahajjud*. Weeping, he Said;

"O Allāh (ﷻ), You commanded *jihād* and urged towards it. However, You did not grant me the provisions necessary for it nor did You place in Your prophet's hands the means to carry

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[98] Weak with this wording: transmitted by Ibn Hishām as *mu'addal*. In another version 'Ā'ishah is reported to have said that the Prophet (ﷺ) made this supplication under other circumstances, although its chain is weak as well. What is authentic is that on this occasion the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Nothing that 'Uthmān (ﷺ) does after today will harm him."

me. Thus I hereby give away in charity to every Muslim all the wrongs that have been committed against me, whether against my property, or body, or honour."

❑ The man offered the morning prayers as usual with the people, and then the Prophet (ﷺ) asked:

"Where is the person who gave charity last night."

No-one stood up. Again he asked, "Where is the charity-giver? Let him stand up."

So he stood up and told him what he had done. Upon this the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Rejoice, for by Him in Whose hands is my life, it has been recorded among the accepted *zakāh*."[99]

❑ Then there were the hypocrites who sought excuses. Their hatred for Islām kept them for offering any aid to it, so it was not to be expected that they would make preparations for the battle or wish that the *mujāhidin* should return. One of the silliest excuses offered by these hypocrites was what Al-Jidd ibn Qays said to the Prophet, who had urged him to participate in the *jihād*.

He said, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), give me permission (to stay) and do not put me to the test. By Allāh (ﷻ), my people know that there is no man more attracted to women than myself, and I fear that if I see the women of the Romans I shall not be able to restrain myself." The Prophet (ﷺ) turned away from him.[100]

The following *āyah* was revealed about this incident:

﴾Of them is he who says: Grant me leave [to stay at home] and do not tempt me. Surely it is into temptation that they [thus] have fallen. Indeed, hell is all around the disbelievers.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 49)

❑ There were those whose minds were not made up at first. However, after the departure of the army, they realized the danger to their faith if they remained behind and so they arose to

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[99] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Ibn Isḥāq transmitted it without a chain, although Ibn Ḥajar quotes a number of authorities for it in *Al-Iṣābah*.

[100] Weak: Ibn Hishām and Ibn Jarīr transmitted it from Ibn Isḥāq, whose chain is weak.

catch up with what they had nearly missed. One such person was Abū Khaythamah, who returned home on a hot day after the Prophet (ﷺ) and his men had left, to find that both his wives had prepared for him a delicious meal and cold, refreshing drink. His home was fresh and cool amid his date garden whose fruit was ripening. His conscience began to prick him, and he said "How could Abū Khaythamah be in the cool shade with a meal prepared and beautiful women while the Prophet (ﷺ) is in the sun, wind and heat? By Allāh (ﷻ), this is not justice!" He swore that he would not enter the room of either of his wives until he caught up with the Prophet (ﷺ), and he asked them to prepare water and provisions for him. Then he took his mount and went off in search of the Prophet (ﷺ), and was unable to find him until he reached Tabūk.

❑ The army met with grave difficulties on its way to Tabūk. Aḥmad transmitted the following in relation to the *tafsīr* of the *āyāh*,

﴾Allāh has turned in mercy to the prophet, the *muhajirīn* and the Anṣār, who followed him in the hour of hardship﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 117)

❑ They set off for Tabūk, two or three men to a camel. When they started, the heat was intense. They were afflicted with thirst and they began to slaughter their camels to extract the water from their humps. There was hardship in water, hardship in travel and hardship in transport.

❑ 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās reports that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ) was asked to speak about the hour of hardship, and he said:

"We left for Tabūk in intense heat and we stopped at a place. We were afflicted by thirst so much so that we thought we were going to die. A man would slaughter his camel and squeeze the dung in the intestines to get something to drink. Then he would put what remained on his stomach. Abū Bakr (ﷺ) said: O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), surely Allāh (ﷻ) has always responded well to your supplications, so supplicate for us."

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Would you like that ?" When Abū

Bakr (ﷺ) said yes, he raised his hands to the heavens and did not lower them until a fine rain fell which became heavy and everyone filled their containers. Then we went to look and saw that it had not fallen beyond the camp.[101]

❑ Ibn Isḥāq said: "In the army was a hypocrite to whom they turned and said: "Shame on you! Do you need anything more than this," and he replied: "A passing cloud!"

❑ On the way they passed by the homes that had been inhabited by the Thamūd. They were now ruins preserved so that one might remember the wrath of Allāh (ﷻ) upon those who had denied His messengers and hastened His chastisement.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Do not enter the homes of those who have wronged their souls unless you be weeping, lest you are afflicted by what has afflicted them."[102]

It seems that the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted the Muslims to be fully aware of the sources of admonition and to consider seriously the examples which had gone before them. If people are given the opportunity to visit the prison and see, for instance, the execution room, it will not be worthy of them to look at the noose with amusement and lack of concern. The least they should do is to show distress at the plight and execution of the prisoners.

❑ Aḥmad transmitted on the authority of Jābir that when the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by *Al Ḥijr* (the home of the Thamūd) he said:

"Do not ask for miracles, for the people of Ṣālih asked for them and Allāh (ﷻ) sent a camel to them. It would come from this pass and leave from this pass. However, they rebelled against the order of Allāh (ﷻ) and hamstrung it. It used to drink their water one day and they used to drink its milk the next.

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[101] Ibn Kathīr mentioned it in his History from the narration of 'Abdullāh ibn Wahb, leading to Ibn 'Abbās, and said it was good chain. However, I say it is not good because it contains 'Utbah ibn Abi 'Utbah, who, as Ibn Ḥājar pointed out, weak. The Ḥadīth is also quoted by Al-Haythami, who said that Al-Bazzaz and Al Ṭabarāni narrated it and the former's chain is sound. If this is true then the Ḥadīth is *ḥasan* or *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[102] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, and this is one of his wordings. Also narrated by the two Sheikhs in a similar manner.

They hamstrung it and a shout overtook them by which Allāh (ﷻ) destroyed all of them from under the canopy of the heavens."[103]

The prohibition against asking for miracles is to bring people back to the realm of ordinary circumstances, since there is no benefit in going beyond that. It would be better for everyone to spend their energies in fulfilling the duties that are placed on their shoulders and opening their hearts to the commands of Allāh (ﷻ). Before them were those who had seen miracles and yet the hardness of their hearts beguiled them and Allāh's curse befell them.

❑ When the Muslims reached Tabūk, they did not find any of the enemy or any plots. Presumably the Romans preferred to remain in hiding within their frontiers rather than face a confrontation with the youthful force. The Prophet (ﷺ) therefore made use of the opportunity to conclude treaties with the Christian Arab tribes who lived in the vicinity. Those who entered into treaties with him were the Aylah, Adhru, Tayma and Dūmat al-Jandal. The remaining tribes who were working for the Roman cause became convinced that the confidence they had in their former chief was now on the verge of being eroded.

❑ The Expedition of Tabūk resembled the Battles of the Allies: Although in the early stage the Muslims faced tremendous pressure, in the end they returned with ease and honour. The Prophet (ﷺ) spent ten or more days in the area on the look-out for any movements from the Romans. When he saw that they were not going to come forward for a confrontation, he decided to return to Madīnah, successful and victorious.

❑ As he approached Madīnah and saw its signposts from afar, he said, "This is Tābah; and this is Uḥud, a mountain which loves us and which we love.[104]

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[103] In the *Musnad* of Aḥmad. Ibn Kathīr, Al-Ḥākim said it was *ṣaḥīḥ* and Ibn Ḥājar said it was *ḥasan*. However, I object since the chain contains Abul Zubayr, who is known for *tadlīs*.

[104] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs and others.

The news of his arrival filtered down to the people and all the women, children and slaves came out chanting:

"The full moon has risen upon us from *Tanīyāt al Widā.*'

We must give thanks as long as a *Da'i* calls to Allāh (ﷻ)."

❑ The Army of Hardship was given a warm welcome; it was the largest army ever to go with the Prophet. It numbered thirty thousand. He did not forget while going or returning those good-hearted individuals who could not find anything to take them on the *jihād* and had to remain behind, their eyes streaming with tears.

❑ Anas ibn Mālik (ﷺ) narrated that: "When approaching Madīnah on his return from Tabūk the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Truly in Madīnah are people who were with you when you marched and whenever you crossed a valley."

The Companions asked: "Though they were in Madīnah, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?"

He said: "Though they were in Madīnah. They had reasons for not being able to come."[105] In this tender manner the Prophet (ﷺ) consoled and honoured those men who saw him off with their hearts as he was going to meet the Romans. Thus he made them feel contented and removed a heavy grief from their hearts.

❑ As for the hypocrites who thought evil and wished for defeat, and the bedouin tribes who considered Islām a calamity which had befallen them and were thus looking forward to a turn of the tide against its upholders, they had a long torment awaiting them.

Those Who Were Left Behind[106]

Upon entering Madīnah, the Prophet (ﷺ) went first to the mosque, where he prayed two *rak'ats* and then sat down to receive the people. The hypocrites came and offered their excuses and swore allegiance to him. They comprised about

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[105] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī.

[106] This narration is a summary of what is contained in Zād al-Ma'ād.

eighty men. He accepted their excuses, asked Allāh's forgiveness for them and left their souls to Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ Ka'b ibn Mālik (ﷺ) came and offered *salām*. The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled as one who was angry and asked him to come near. Ka'b (ﷺ) narrated:

"I walked in and sat down in front of him. He asked me what had detained me and if I had not bought my mount. I replied: "Yes. By Allāh (ﷻ), had I sat with anyone from this world but you, I should have found it easy to appease his anger with some excuse and I have the knack of arguing. However, by Allāh (ﷻ), I know that if I speak the truth to you and you are angry with me, then I am hopeful that Allāh (ﷻ) will forgive me. By Allāh (ﷻ), I had no excuse, and, by Allāh (ﷻ), I was never stronger nor in better health than when I held back from going with you."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "As for him, he has spoken the truth. So stand up, until Allāh (ﷻ) decides about you," and I stood up.

❑ Some men from the Banū Salmah flew into a rage, and followed me with a scolding. They said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), we do not know of you having committed a sin before this, and yet you were unable to offer an excuse to the Prophet similar to the excuse of the others who remained behind. It would have been enough to cover your sin if the Prophet (ﷺ) had prayed to Allāh (ﷻ) for your forgiveness." They continued to scold me so much that I wanted to go back and contradict myself. The I asked if anyone else had done the same as I, and they replied that there were two more men who have spoken as I had spoken, and had been given the same answer as I had. I asked who they were and they said that they were Murarah ibn al Rabi' al-'Amiri and Hilāl ibn Umayyah al-Wāqifī. The two names mentioned were men who had taken part in Badr. In them I had a good example. So I continued on my way."

❑ "The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade the Muslims to speak to us three from among all those who had remained behind. So they kept away from us, and for me the earth changed so much that I

could not recognize it again! We continued like that for fifty nights. My two companions felt dejected and remained at home, weeping; However, I who was the youngest and strongest of the three, used to go out and observe the prayers with the Muslims and walk about the markets, though no-one would speak to me. I would come to the Prophet (ﷺ) and say *salām* to him while he was in his assembly after prayers, and I would say to myself: "Did he move his lips in reply to me or not? Then I would pray near him and steal glances at him. When I turned to my prayer he would turn to me, and when I turned towards him he would turn away from me."

❑ "As the boycott by the Muslims dragged on, I climbed up the wall of a garden belonging to Abū Qatādah who was my cousin and the dearest of persons to me. I greeted him, but, by Allāh (ﷻ), he did not reply! I said: 'Abū Qatādah, I beseech you in the name of Allāh (ﷻ), do you know me to love Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ)? He remained silent, and I asked him a second time. He still remained silent, and I asked him a third time. Then he said, "Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) know better." My eyes brimmed with tears and I climbed down the wall."

❑ "While I was walking in the market of Madīnah a Nabatean from Syria, who had come to Madīnah to sell food, said: 'Who can show me Ka'b ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه)? The people pointed me out to him, and he came up and handed me a letter from the king of Ghassān. It contained the following words: "To proceed: it has reached me that your companion has boycotted you. However, God has not intended you to be in a place of humiliation and loss. So come to us and we shall compensate you." Upon reading it I said that this was also a form of test. I threw it into the oven and burnt it to ashes."

❑ "When forty days out of the fifty had passed, the Prophet's messenger came to me and said: "Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) orders you to keep away from your wife. I asked whether I should divorce her or not, and he said, "No. But keep away from her and do not approach her."

A similar message was conveyed to my two associates. I said to my wife: "Go to your parents and stay with them until Allāh (ﷻ) decides about this affair."

Hilāl ibn Umayyah's wife went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "Hilāl is an old man and has no servant. Do you object to my looking after him?"

He replied: 'No. But he should not approach you."

She said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), he has made no movement towards anything. He has not stopped weeping since this affair started up to this day."

❑ One of my family said to me: "Why don't you ask the Prophet (ﷺ) to give permission to your wife as he gave leave to Hilāl's wife to look after him?"

"I replied: no, by Allāh (ﷻ), I shall not ask him about this. I don't know what he will say if I ask him for I am a young man. After that, I spent another ten nights until the fifty were completed since the Prophet (ﷺ) had forbidden the Muslims to speak to us. When I offered the morning prayer after the fiftieth night on the roof of one of our houses and as I was sitting in the condition that Allāh (ﷻ) mentioned. "My soul was straitened upon me and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened upon me" I heard the voice of someone shouting from a nearly hill at the top of his voice: "Ka'b ibn Mālik (ﷺ)! Rejoice!" I fell prostrate, for I knew that relief had come from Allāh (ﷻ)."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) had informed the people after the morning prayer of Allāh's (ﷻ) relenting towards us and they had come to give us the good news. Some of them went in the direction of my two companions, and one man jumped on a horse to come to me. However, another from Aslaj hastened to the top of the hill and his voice was quicker than the horse. When the one whose voice I heard came to give me the news, I took off my clothes and gave them to him in joy. By Allāh (ﷻ), they were the only clothes that I possessed so I borrowed some clothes and put them on, then went to see the Prophet (ﷺ). The people kept

coming to me in throngs and congratulating me on Allāh's relentance towards me.

❑ "I entered the mosque and the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting there with the people around him. Ṭalḥaḥ ibn 'Ubaydullāh got up and hurried towards me. He shook my hand and congratulated me. By Allāh (ﷻ), he was the only *muhājir* to stand up for me and I shall never forget it."

❑ When I said *salām* to the Prophet (ﷺ), he replied, his face lit up with joy: "Rejoice at the best day which has come upon you since your mother gave birth to you."

I asked: "Is it from you, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), or from Allāh (ﷻ)."

He replied: "No. It is from Allāh (ﷻ)." Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) was pleased his face would light up as if it were a piece of the moon, and we used to recognize this in him.

I sat down in front of him and asked: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), part of my repentance is to give all my possessions away in charity for Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ)."

He said: "Keep a part of your wealth for it is better for you."

I said: "Well, I'll keep my share that I received at Khaybar."

❑ I said: "Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), Allāh (ﷻ) saved me only because I was truthful, and part of my repentance is that I shall speak only the truth as long as I live."

"By Allāh (ﷻ), I do not know of any Muslim whom Allāh (ﷻ) tested more in truthful speech than He tested me from the time I said this is to the Prophet (ﷺ) up to this day. By Allāh (ﷻ), from that time up to this day I have never deliberately told a lie, and I hope that Allāh (ﷻ) will protect me from it as long as I live. Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following āyāt to his Prophet (ﷺ) on this occasion:

﴾**Allāh has turned in mercy to the Prophet and to the *muhajirīn* and Anṣār. O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allāh, and be with the truthful.**﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 117-119)"

❑ "By Allāh (ﷻ), there is no blessing which Allāh (ﷻ) granted me, after guiding me to Islām, greater in my mind than my being

truthful to the Prophet (ﷺ), not having lied to him and not being destroyed as those who did were destroyed. What Allāh (ﷻ) said when He sent down His Revelation about those who had lied was the worst thing that could be said of anyone. He (ﷻ) said:

﴾They will swear by Allāh to you, when you return to them, that you may let them be... They swear to you, that you may accept them. Though you accept them, Allāh truly does not accept wrongdoers.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 95-96)"

❑ "The three of us remaining behind was in regard to the others whose excuses the Prophet (ﷺ) accepted when they swore allegiance to him. He accepted their pledge of allegiance and asked for forgiveness for them. However, he postponed our case until Allāh (ﷻ) passed His judgement (the three who were left behind). What Allāh (ﷻ) mentioned here was not the reason for our staying away from the battle. What he really meant was that our case was deferred to a later date beyond that for those whose excuses were accepted."

The Mosque of Dissent (ḍirār)

The Prophet (ﷺ) trod the path of leniency and indulgence with those who pretended to be Muslims, accepting their excuses which were false, and refraining from exposing them even though they were slipping beyond the bounds of obedience. If one of them committed a gross act which warranted the death penalty, he preferred to turn a blind eye so that it might not be said that Muhammad (ﷺ) was killing his Companions. Of course they had nothing to do with his Companions, but this is what people would say in any case. If these hypocrites had a little bit of good in them, they would have been won over by this magnanimity and they would have shed their deceptive behaviour and come fully into Islām with sincere and pure hearts. However, this refined method of treating them only increased their effrontery against Allāh (ﷻ) and his Messenger (ﷺ). Their treacherous and evil

ways reached the stage where it became imperative to expose them and make the masses of the *Ummah* aware of the secrets of their hearts and actions.

❑ Āyāt of the Qur'ān were revealed which, at last, criticized what the hypocrites had done, and drew back the curtains behind which they were hiding. Their antics both before and after Tabūk were the final episode in the chapter of deceit, hypocrisy and treachery, and the tolerance which they had for long abused and never appreciated. The Prophet (ﷺ) was ordered to expose their evil to the people and not to accept anything from them nor even pray for them. He was taught that his prayer for their forgiveness would not be accepted, and the Muslims were asked to boycott them.

❑ The strongest plot hatched by the hypocrites was to build a mosque in which they alone would meet and scheme against Islām under the cover of a meeting for the purpose of worship. They had gone to the Prophet (ﷺ) before he left for Tabūk, telling him that they had built a mosque for the sick and needy, and for rainy nights, and would like him to come and pray in it and bless it. He made the excuse that he was going on a long journey and was busy preparing for it. However, he had promised to pray in it on his return, God willing.[107]

❑ When he returned with his army and the hypocrites were exposed, he sent two of his Companions to raze the mosque to the ground. They took firewood and at the sight of the flames the hypocrites knew that their plot had failed. Thus was destroyed the last brainwave to be erected by hypocrisy. In this connection the following āyāt were revealed:

﴿And as for those who chose a place of worship out of opposition and disbelief, to cause dissent among the believers, and as an outpost for those who fought against Allāh and His messenger previously, they will surely swear: we intended nothing save good. Allāh bears

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[107] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. However, Ibn Kathīr mentioned it in his *tafsīr* from Ibn Isḥāq from Al Zuhri, Yazīd ibn Rūmān, 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Bakr, 'Āṣim ibn 'Umar, Ibn Qatādah and others as *mursal*.

witness that they really are liars. Never stand [to pray] there. A place of worship which was founded upon duty [to Allāh] from the first day is more worthy for you to stand [to pray] therein.﴾
(Qur'ān 9: 107-108)

The Beginning of the Deputations

The march to and from Tabūk took a number of days: the Muslims had left Madīnah in Rajab and returned in Ramaḍān to observe their duty of fasting. Not long after their return they received the good news that a deputation from the Thaqīf had arrived in Madīnah to negotiate their acceptance of Islām and were seeking an audience with the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh (ﷻ) had answered the supplication of His Prophet (ﷺ) to soften the hearts of the leaders of Ṭā'if towards the truth. After the siege around them was disbanded, the people of Ṭā'if had begun to deliberate their future, though the majority still remained attached to their idols. Their chief, 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd, had tried to convince them to give up this *jahilīyah*. Even though he was a beloved and respected chief among them, still they refused to listen, and when he declared his acceptance of Islām and invited them to it, they shot arrows at him and killed him. However, the intelligent ones did not despair of their people coming to their senses, for they knew that the Thaqīf could not ignore the reality in every corner, and the state of Islām was growing more dominant day after day.

❑ Thus 'Āmir ibn Umayyah had a tete-a-tete with 'Abd Yā Layl ibn 'Amr, and managed to convince him that a deputation should be sent to the Prophet (ﷺ). This deputation consisted of representatives from all the clans of the Thaqīf, so that they would abide by all the stipulations agreed. They debated long with Prophet (ﷺ) in the desires to gain the concession of retaining some *jahili* traits. Nevertheless, he was adamant. They requested that he should not destory Al-Lāt until after three years, then they reduced it to two, then one year, then one month

after their conversion. He rejected all this however, and insisted that it be destroyed at once without any respite. When they saw that their bargaining was hopeless, they asked him not to make them break the idols with their own hands, and he responded by sending someone to break them. They also asked him to exempt them from *ṣalāh* and he said: "There is no good in a religion without prayer (*ṣalāh*).[108]

❑ The deputation returned to Ṭā'if, and accompanying them were Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah and Abū Sufyān, whose job it was to demolish the idols. The day of the demolition was memorable one: the women of the Thaqīf came out bareheaded and wept and wailed as the axes came down upon their gods to whom they had for long bowed their heads and made sacrifices and offerings. It is reported that every-time al Mughīrah brought the axe down upon the idols, Abū Sufyān would say "Alas for you!" in regret. Perhaps he was mocking or consoling the women.

❑ It is no lie that the surrender of the Thaqīf and the their acceptance of Islām, were a great gain and a new victory. There was no tribe of any might left in the peninsula which did not submit to Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger after the Thaqīf. As for the tribes which were still in their *jahilīyah*, they were only scattered groups who were soon to see the truth. The night which had been imposed on them was about to fade away, and in fact, the rays of the dawn had already penetrated here and there, so that there was no space left for the darkness to cling to.

❑ Ibn Isḥāq said: "When Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) conquered Makkah, and wound up the Tabūk expedition, and the Thaqīf accepted Islām, deputations of the Arabs came to him from every direction." The Arabs had, in fact, been waiting to see what would befall Islām in its conflict with the Quraish since they were the leaders and guides of the masses, the custodians of the Ka'bah and the pure sons of Isma'īl and they were also the ones who first showed hostility to Islām. So when Makkah was

[108] Weak: Ibn Hishām mentions it from Ibn Isḥāq as *mu'addal*.

conquered and the Quraish submitted to Islām, the Arabs knew that they had no power to fight the Prophet (ﷺ) and they entered into Islām, coming to it from all quarters.

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ):

﴾**When Allāh's succour and the triumph come and you see mankind entering the religion of Allāh in troops, then sing the praises of your Lord, and seek forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever-ready to show mercy.**﴿ (Qur'ān 110: 1-3)

❑ After how many years did the Prophet (ﷺ) reach this stage? After twenty-two years of tireless propagation, constant reminder, bearing insults and fighting aggression. If there still remained any traces of the ignorant who abased themselves before the idols and strove to create chaos, then no intelligent person would deny that they needed to be weaned from these vices. Thus, Islām applied itself to the purification of the peninsula from idol-worshipping and made the idolaters conscious that they had a limited respite to eradicate all their evils. It was made known to them that the idols which they had sanctified around the Ka'bah were no more, that the Ka'bah had become the central mosque of the upholders of *tawhīd*, and that it was no more the place of pilgrimage for ignorant people who sought the blessing of stones. This, and the nude traditions by which they had circumambulated the Kabah, were to be abolished forever.

❑ The pilgrimage season of the ninth year approached and the idolaters continued as had been their custom: making pilgrimage to the holy sanctuary, but not taking heed of the fate of their broken idols. In spite of the fact that these idols to which they had bowed and prayed were demolished, their worshippers still remained polytheists, and perhaps in their hearts there was regret that the Ka'bah was now empty of them. Thus it was the duty of the Muslims to put a stop to these comedies and sweep away this humiliating scene from the nobility of the mankind.

The Pilgrimage of Abū Bakr (ﷺ)

The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed Abū Bakr (ﷺ) as head of the Muslims who were going on the pilgrimage. After he had left Madīnah with his sacrificial animals, Sūrat *al tawbah* was revealed, and it was suggested to the Prophet (ﷺ) to send the Revelation so that he might proclaim it to all the pilgrims.

The Prophet (ﷺ) chose 'Alī (ﷺ) for this task, saying: "Only a member of my household will deliver it for me."[109] This he did in accordance with the Arab custom as regards pacts of life and property. Do you not see how he had appointed 'Alī (ﷺ), before making the Hijrah, to return the valuables with which the Makkans had entrusted him? The bonds of kinship guaranteed absolute responsibility in these matters. Thus it was as if the Prophet (ﷺ) delivered with his own hands what 'Alī (ﷺ) delivered and read out with his own lips to the people. The observance of this tradition was not obligatory; it was simply an extra precaution on the part of the Prophet (ﷺ).

❑ Ibn Isḥāq said:

"Then he summoned 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and said to him: "Go with this information and recite from the beginning of *Barā'ah* and announce to the people on the Day of the Sacrifice, when they are assembled at Mina, that an unbeliever will not enter *Jannah*, that after this year a polytheist will not be allowed to make the pilgrimage nor will a naked person be allowed to circumambulate the Ka'bah, and that whoever has a pact with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) will be given its full length of time."

❑ 'Alī (ﷺ) left on Al-'Adhā, the Prophet's (ﷺ) camel, and caught up with Abū Bakr (ﷺ) on the way. Upon seeing him, Abū Bakr (ﷺ) asked whether he was made head (of the pilgrims) or a follower. He said he was a follower, and they proceeded.[110] Abū Bakr (ﷺ) remained, as the Prophet (ﷺ) had

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[109] *Ḥasan*: Ibn Hishām transmitted it from Ibn Isḥ-āq as *mursal*. It has other ḥādīths to support it and these are mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in his History.

[110] *Ḥasan*: it is the continuation of the previously mentioned Ḥadīth.

appointed him, the one to lead the people in the pilgrimage rites, while 'Alī (ﷺ) was to proclaim to the people what he had been commissioned to say and to recite to all the Arabs the first portion of Sūrah Bara'ah, which dealt with them in detail and delivered them to paganism in their country. Abū Bakr (ﷺ) also appointed some other announcers from within the gathering to assist 'Alī (ﷺ) in his proclamations.

❑ Zayd ibn Yafi' said that he asked 'Alī (ﷺ) what he was sent to do at the pilgrimage, and 'Alī (ﷺ) replied that he was sent with four proclamations: "That only a believer would enter *Jannah*; that a naked person should not circumambulate the Ka'bah; that unbelievers would not be allowed to join the Muslims in the *Ḥaram* after that year; and that anyone who had a pact with the Prophet (ﷺ) would be allowed the length of the pact, whereas anybody who did not have a pact would be allowed four months."[111]

❑ In another book of ours, Contemplations of Religion and Life, we spoke of the status that Islām accords contracts, and we explained the laws contained in the early part of Sūrah *al Tawbah*. Everyone who wishes should know that the promulgation of a law to eradicate paganism, like the promulgation of a law to illiteracy, is a noble, humanitarian deed and no objection to it can be made by anyone wanting the best for the mankind and wishing it to progress and develop.

❑ Islām spent twenty-two years fighting superstition by means of education and training, whenever the opportunity existed to spread knowledge and morality, and by means of reprisals and wars whenever ignorance and misguidance obstructed its way and tried to make its efforts go in vain. In the beginning, Islām allowed paganism its right to life and left those who apostated to go back to it if they so wished. This was not done in honour of paganism but in respect of people's intelligence and conscience, because it was rare to find people making a fools of themselves

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[111] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Aḥmad and Al Tirmidhī.

by leaving Allāh (ﷻ), the Almighty, and turning to image of stone, wood or food for worship.

However, when it became clear that the pagans were making light of everything and were exploiting their rights in order to cause chaos, aggression and courage, there was no longer any reason for leaving them alone. A vicious dog is not left to roam free: if he slips his collar, his blood has to be spilt, and it is foolish to regard what happens to him as an act of murder.

❑ Those who think, or rather, delight in thinking, that Islām suppressed freedom of thought by uprooting paganism are either mistaken or biased. In the light of the experiences and misfortunes which the Muslims encountered throughout the twenty-two years, it is obvious why so much anger was shown in the end, and why Revelation itself cast off the idolaters and refused to accept any excuse from them. It had in fact become quite clear that the evils which were manifest in them were a part of their character, and that they would never abandon it nor would it abandon them. Thus there was no place left for their idols after the time had elapsed which was stipulated for them.

﴾Freedom from obligation [is proclaimed] from Allāh and His messenger for those of the idolaters with whom you made a treaty; travel freely in the land for four months, and know that you cannot escape Allāh and that Allāh will confound the disbelievers [in His guidance]. And a proclamation from Allāh and His messenger to all men on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage that Allāh is free from obligation to the idolaters, and [so is] His messenger. So, if you repent, It will be better for you.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 1-3)

❑ Before and after this frightful warning, delegation upon delegation were visiting Madīnah to pledge allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) and to enter into the religion of truth. These groups of people had in recent years learnt a little about Islām, for the news of this new dispensation had spread to all corners of the peninsula along with some of its beliefs and teachings. Both supporters as well as detractors were following its continuous

struggle for life, marking all the sacrifices that Islām as well as its enemies were making, until matters reached this clear finale.

❑ We all know that a party which begins its activities with only a handful of workers gains a large number of supporter when it makes tangible gains, so what about the one whose enemies disappear and whose stars begin to shine? No wonder, therefore, that Madīnah was flooded with waves of people wishing to embrace this faith or wishing to sign treaties of peace and co-operation with it.

❑ We are not going to take a census of these groups who came from the east and the west. However, we shall present two examples of these groups: one pagan, who came seeking Islām, and the other Christian, who came to reconnoitre, negotiate and make agreements after arguments.

A Deputation of the Pagans and a Deputation of the People of the Book

The tribe of Sa'd ibn Bakr sent Ḍamām ibn Tha'labah as an envoy to the Prophet (ﷺ). He rode his camel into Madīnah, made it kneel down at the door of the mosque and tethered it. He entered and saw the Prophet (ﷺ) sitting with his companions. Ḍamām was a hefty, hirsute fellow with his hair in two locks. He came up until he stood by the Prophet (ﷺ) and said:
"Which of you is 'Abdul Muṭṭalib."

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "I am 'Abdul Muṭṭalib."
Ḍamām : "Muhammad (ﷺ)?"
The Prophet (ﷺ) : "Yes"
Damām : "O son of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, I am going to ask you some questions and I'll be very frank with you, so do not feel angry."
The Prophet (ﷺ) : "I shall not be angry, so ask what you wish."
Ḍamām : "I implore you by Allāh (ﷻ), your God

and the God of those before you, and the God of those who are to come after you: Did Allāh (ﷻ) send you to us as a messenger?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) : O Allāh (ﷻ), yes."

Ḍamām : "I implore you by Allāh (ﷻ), your God and the God of those before you, and the God of those who are to come after you: Did Allāh (ﷻ) order you to order us to worship Him alone, not to associate anything with Him, and to give up these partners which our forefather worshipped with Him?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "O Allāh (ﷻ), yes."

❑ In another version, Ḍamām said: "Muhammad (ﷺ), your messenger came to us and claimed that you claim that Allāh (ﷻ) sent you.

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "He spoke the truth."

Ḍamām : "Then who created the heavens?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "Allāh (ﷻ)."

Ḍamām : "And who created the earth?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "Allāh (ﷻ)."

Ḍamām : "Who erected these mountains and placed in them what he placed?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "Allāh (ﷻ)."

Ḍamām : Then by Him Who created the heavens and the earth and erected these mountains, did Allāh (ﷻ) send you?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "Yes."

Ḍamām : "Your messenger claimed that there are five prayers (*salāh*) incumbent on us every day-and night.

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "He spoke the truth."

Ḍamām : "By Him Who sent you, did Allāh (ﷻ) order you to do this?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) : "Yes."

❑ One by one, Ḍamām mentioned the duties and laws of Islām, and when he finished he said: "Well, I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ) and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allāh. I shall observe these duties and keep away from whatever you have forbidden us and I shall not add or subtract to them."

❑ He went away, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "If the one with his hair in two locks is telling the truth he shall enter *Jannah.*"

❑ Ḍamām rode home and the people flocked around him. The first thing he said was: "How evil are Al-Lāt and Al-Uzza!"[112]

❑ Shocked, they said: "Steady, Ḍamām. Fear leprosy. Fear insanity!"

He replied: "Woe unto you! By Allāh (ﷻ), they can neither harm nor benefit! Allāh (ﷻ) has sent a prophet (ﷺ) and revealed to him a book with which he saves you from what you were. I testify that there is no god but Allāh (ﷻ); He is alone and has no partners, and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and Messenger. I have come to you from him with what he has ordered and prohibited for you." By evening there was not a single man or woman in that district who had not become a Muslim.[113]

❑ That was a deputation which represented the simplicity of the bedouin in their logic, their straightforwardness in argument and discussion, and the freedom of their minds from the complications which obstruct the truth in its liberal flow. We are not denying the fact that the previous struggle of the *da'wah* may have helped them to arrive at these quick conclusions. This

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[112] Ibn Kathīr said: "This shows that Ḍamām returned to his tribe before the conquest of Makkah because Al 'Uzza was destroyed by Khālid ibn al Walīd during the days of the Conquest."

[113] *Ḥasan*: transmitted by Abū Dawūd, Al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. Muslim had an abridged version.

is natural, for the changing of one's religion is not like the changing of one's clothing. Ḍamām, while asking the Prophet (ﷺ) and addressing his people, must have been conscious in his mind that the new dispensation had already passed through several phases of trials and tribulations which proved its truthfulness and sincerity. His and his people's acceptance of Islām was, therefore, not the result of an hour's talk.

❑ That was the deputation of the illiterate. It represents other deputations, whether large or small, which came to Madīnah to see the Prophet (ﷺ) and pledge allegiance to him, then to return to their people, bearing guidance and good news.

❑ As for the People of the Book, only a few of them responded to the truth and rushed to embrace and support it. As for the vast majority, their opposition ranged from sheer enmity to complacency. Although the Jews insisted on exterminating Islām, they fell into the evil of their own intentions: their military and political might was crushed before they reached their goal. Islām allowed them to remain as individuals in its state, adhering to their religion if they pleased, but not allowing them to assemble and plot intrigues and aggression. It had a right without doubt to do so. The personal rights of the Jews were not abolished under the Islāmic system: the Prophet (ﷺ) himself chose to pawn his armour with a Jew in order to take a loan from him,[114] and he never thought of using his status to harass the Jew.

❑ The Christians' opposition was less severe wherever they drifted away from the rule of the Church. Some of them accepted Islām out of admiration for its simplicity and straight forwardness, whereas others remained in what they had inherited. The relationship between the two religions went in accordance with what we have already explained, until it turned into an armed conflict between the Muslims and the Romans. Christianity was at that time prevalent in the north and south of the Arabian peninsula

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[114] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī and others.

because of the military and political supermacy of the Romans. Thus the Muslims, being at war with the Roman Empire, decided to define their stance with the Christians of the south, especially since the Romans were showering gifts on their missionaries there, building churches and urging them to continue to Christianize the tribes living in these parts.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) sent a letter to the people of Najran, in which was written:

"In the Name of the God of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), Isḥāq (ﷺ) and Ya'qūb (ﷺ), to proceed: I am inviting you to the worship of Allāh (ﷻ) and away from the worship of (His) creatures; and I am inviting you to the sovereignty of Allāh (ﷻ) and away from the sovereignty of (His) creatures. If you refuse, then (pay) *jizyah*; and if you refuse, then I declare war on you. Peace be upon you."[115]

Najrān, the Ka'bah of the Christians in the south, sent its deputation to Madīnah to discuss the matter with the Prophet (ﷺ). They arrived in the city after *'Aṣr* and entered the mosque. The first thing that they did was to turn in the direction of Jerusalem to pray in accordance with the Christian rites. The people wanted to stop them, but the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered them to be left alone to finish their prayers.[116] The Prophet (ﷺ) saw them wearing the priestly fineries in order to meet him. They had gold rings on their fingers and their robes were of silk; beneath their caps and hoods it could be seen that they had put on airs of extreme affectation. The Prophet (ﷺ) refused to speak to them until they had changed back into their travelling dress and put aside these fineries.[117]

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[115] Weak: transmitted by Bayhaqī with a chain of unknown narrators.

[116] Weak: Ibn Hishām transmits it from Ibn Isḥāq with a chain which is either *mursal* or *mu'addal*.

[117] This is from the above-mentioned Ḥadīth of Al-Bayhaqī.

❑ The surprising thing was that one of them asked the Prophet (ﷺ) the following questions: "Muhammad (ﷺ), do you want us to worship you as Jesus, son of Mary, is worshipped? Is this to which you are calling us?"

❑ His reply was: "Allāh (ﷻ) forbid that I should be worshipped besides Him, or that I should order anyone beside Him to be worshipped. He did not send me with this nor did He order me to it.[118] Concerning this, Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the following:

﴾It is not [possible] for any human being whom Allāh had given the Scripture, Wisdom and the Prophethood that he should afterwards have said mankind: be my servants instead of Allāh's but [what he said was]: be faithful servants of the Lord by virtue of your constant teaching of the Scripture and your constant study of it. And he commanded you not to take the angels and the prophets for lords. Would he command you to disbelieve after you had surrendered [to Allāh].﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 79-80)

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) invited them to become Muslims, and they replied that they were Muslims before him. Upon this he said: "You lie. What prevents you from Islām is your claim that Allāh (ﷻ) has a son, your worship of the cross and your consumption of pork."

❑ They argued with him about Jesus, saying: "Who is his father?"[119]

It is reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) replied to them in the following manner: "Don't you know that Allāh (ﷻ) is Living and will not die, and that Jesus is subject to death?"

The Christians : "Yes."
The Prophet (ﷺ) : "Don't you know that our Lord is Sovereign over everything and watches over it, protects it and sustains it?"

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[118] Weak: transmitted by Ibn Abī Muhammad Al Anṣārī, who is unknown.

[119] This much comes in-the above-mentioned *mursal* Ḥadīth of Ibn Isḥāq. I have not found the rest of it with him. However, part of it comes in the above-mentioned Ḥadīth of Al Bayhaqī.

The Christians : “Yes.”
The Prophet (ﷺ) : “Does Jesus have any of these qualities?”
The Christians : “No.”
The Prophet (ﷺ) : “Don’t you know that nothing can hide from Allāh (ﷻ) in the earth and in the heavens?”
The Christians : “Yes.”
The Prophet (ﷺ) : “Does Jesus know any of that?”
The Christians : “No.”
The Prophet (ﷺ) : “Don’t you know that our Lord fashioned Jesus in the womb in the way He wished, and that our Lord does not eat food or drink liquid and does not answer the call of nature?”
The Christians “Yes.”
The Prophet (ﷺ) : “Don’t you know that Jesus’s mother bore him as any woman bears children, then gave birth to him as any woman delivers, then he was nursed as any child is nursed, then he ate food and drank liquid and answered the call of nature?”
The Christian : “Yes.”
The Prophet (ﷺ) : “Then how can he be as you claim?”
The Christians : “Don’t you say about Jesus that he is the Word of God which He gave to Mary, and Spirit from Him?”
The Prophet (ﷺ) : “Yes.”

❑ When he saw that they were bent on arguing, and that they insisted on calling Jesus God or the like of God, he said: “Stay the night and tomorrow I shall explain it to you.” Before morning the following āyāt were revealed:

﴾Indeed! The likeness of Jesus to Allāh is as the likeness of Adam. We created him of dust, then He said unto him: Be! And he was. [This is] the truth from your Lord [O Muhammad], so do not be of those who

waver. And whoever disputes with you concerning him, after the knowledge which has come to you say [to him]: Come! We shall summon-our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then we shall pray humbly [to our Lord] and [solemnly] invoke the curse of Allāh upon those who lie.❵ (Qur'ān 3: 59-61)

❑ Next morning the Prophet (ﷺ) came out with his two grandchildren, Ḥasan and Ḥusain, and his daughter, Fāṭimah. He was prepared to participate with the deputation from Najran in a collective prayer calling down the curse of Allāh (ﷻ) on the liars. The deputation knew that he were right in his claim that Jesus was human like himself, and they were mistaken in their attribution of divinity to him. Why should they, then, call down the curse of God on themselves? They looked at Muhammad (ﷺ) and his daughter and grandchildren, and felt that the liar would not be destroyed alone but that his family would go with him too, and their fear extended to the fate of their own families and children.

❑ Some of them said to the others: "If this man is a king we shall not be safe if we reject or oppose him: his empire is spreading, and perhaps, he will bring ruin to our people. And if he is a true Prophet then there is no need to worry. Not a single hair or nail of our will remain on this earth without being destroyed (if we engage prayer). So what do we do?"

❑ The spokesman of the group, Shurahbīl ibn Wada'ah, stepped forward and said: "I have a better idea than mutual cursing: we shall allow you to rule over us and whatever you decree will be enforced."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) asked : "Perhaps there is someone (high than you) who will blame you?"

❑ Shurahbīl replied : "Ask about me."

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) asked about him and learnt that the people of the district did nothing without his approval, and he said: "A fortunate unbeliever." He concluded a treaty with them by virtue of which they became subjects of the Islāmic state. The clauses of this treaty state:

"That the Christians of Najran are under the protection of Allāh (ﷻ) and Muhammad (ﷺ) the Prophet in relation to their persons, their religion, their land, their property, those absent and those present, their clan and their proteges.

That they will not be changed from what they are: none of their rights or the rights of their religion will be changed, nor will any priest be changed from his priesthood nor monk form his monasticism, nor anything great or small in their hands.

That there is no suspicion about them nor blood-feud of *jahilīyah* and they will not be made to fight *jihād* nor pay *zakāh* and no army will enter their land. That whoever demands a right from them will be dealt with justly, neither wronging nor wronged, and whoever devours interest will be relieved of any protection, and no man among them will be held responsible for the wrong of another.

That whatever is in this treaty has the sanction of Allāh (ﷻ) and Muhammad (ﷺ), Allāh's Messenger, until Allāh (ﷻ) sends His command, as long as they abide by it and fulfil their dues and do not resort to wrong."

The witness to this treaty were: Abū Sufyān, Ghaylān ibn 'Amr, Mālik ibn 'Awf, Al-Aqra' ibn Ḥābis and Al-Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah.

❑ What were the duties of the Christians of Najran in return for these rights? They had to pay two thousand ḥallahs a year to the state! It was a meagre substitute for the *zakāh* which the Muslims alone had to pay and the *jihād* which they alone had to bear. This was the *jizyah* which was imposed on Najrān after the negotiations which you have seen.

❑ In this way Islām severed the ties which existed between those Christian tribes and the Roman Empire, with which it was at war, after guaranteeing religious freedom to whoever desired it and abstain from interference. We should like, as a challenge, to ask whether the Christian groups have treated one another with such tolerance? Or was it a precedent set by Islām in those dark ages? Again we should like to ask whether the People of the Book respected the duty they had upon their shoulders and were just to the religion which looked after their interests?

❑ The tenth year of the Hijrah saw Islām spreading its teachings at the expense of a retreating paganism. Some of the southern tribes rebelled against this intrusion and claimed that if a man from the Quraish could become king of the Arabs by pretending to be a prophet, then it was easy for them to present a prophet from their ranks also, who would spread his dominion as Muhammad (ﷺ) did. The sad thing is that the Christians of the south added fuel to these uprisings. For example, Najran wrote to Al-Aswad Al-Ansī, who claimed prophethood, and gave him shelter. From there he went to Yemen, where he established his rule until he was killed by his wife.

❑ Were these troubles of any assistance to the Christians of the north in their war against Islām or were these uprisings stemming simply from pure hatred? What the Christians of Najran did support of Al-Aswad Al-Ansī was the same as the Christians of Banū Taghlib did support Musaylimah the Liar when he in turn claimed prophethood. We can understand if the people of Najran or Taghlib refused to enter Islām and chose to remain in their traditional religion, with which they were contented. However, we simply cannot understand that a person should deny the divinely revealed Scriptures and believe, for

instance, in Bu'kūkah.[120] That is if they really believed in Al Aswad and Musaylimah. If they were just helping in the war against Islām with any weapons available and in partnership with any ally, then this is another matter,[121] for which the physicians of the heart will be baffled to find a cure.

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[120] A comedy.

[121] See our book Tolerance and intolerance Between Islām and Christianity.

Chapter Eight

The Mothers of the Believers

Some writers have raised a storm over the principle of polygamy and have tried to limit or prevent what Islām has permitted in this regard. Sometimes they argue that Islām has not given a clear-cut permission, and at other times they say that, in keeping with the development of civilization and the interests of the mankind that a man should have only one wife.

❑ No doubt these thoughts came into being in our societies as a result of various factors which need detailed analysis to be effectively refuted. For many years now the opponents of polygamy have been trying to have the law changed to suit their views. However, their efforts were halted when they aroused the anger of the *ulama'* and those sources who are concerned with Islāmic affair. At that time I had written an article about the nature of polygamy, which I think would be appropriate to repeat here before dealing with the topic in front of us, since there is an obvious relationship between the two.

❑ Life has fixed cultural and economic laws which inevitably impose themselves upon people, whether they know them and are prepared for them, or whether they are ignorant of them and fail to prepare themselves. Among those matters which social laws determine is the relationship of a single man with a number of women, and feigning ignorance of it can be regarded as a vain attempt at resisting reality.

❑ This is because the proportion of men to women can be either equal or in favour of one side. If they are equal or if women are fewer, then polygamy will automatically disappear and nature will impose its just distribution according to numbers, and every man will, willy-nilly, have to accept his lot. However, if women number more then men, then we are forced with one of three possible situations:

1. Some of the women are perforce deprived of a husband

until death.

2. We allow men to take mistresses and legalize adultery.
3. We allow polygamy.

❑ We think that women themselves, before the men, will reject a life of privation, will also reject a life of sin and transgression. The only course, then, will be left open to a woman, that is, to share her husband with another woman, who will be under his protection just as she is and whose children will be his. Thus there will be no way out of acknowledging the principle of polygamy which Islām has approved.

❑ Moreover, there is a great difference in the sexual appetites of men. Some men have been granted good health, a lively instinct and a comfortable life, which have not been granted to others. It is far from just to equate a man with cold feelings with another who is quick to be aroused. Do we not permit larger quantities of food to those who have large appetites which we do not permit to the indigent and weak?

❑ There is another reason: the wife may be frail, unwell, sterile or elderly, and why should she be cast aside for these reasons? In respect for the old association it is only right that she should remain under her husband's protection and that he be given the option to bring another wife who will do complete justice to the marital relationship.

❑ In spite of the innumerable justifications for polygamy, Islām has adamantly refused to make it an extension to the lusts and leanings of some men toward excessive pleasure or power. Taxes go in accordance with riches and when facilities are provided they are followed by heavier duties. Thus, in the case of polygamy, one must ensure that absolute justice prevails. If a man will harm himself or his children or his wives by polygamy then it is not permissible for him.

❑ If the law considers the inability to bear the necessary expenses as an impediment to marrying one, then it will be an impediment to marrying more than one. The *Sharī'ah* advises the youthful bachelor who cannot maintain a wife to fast and orders the man who cannot find a wife to remain chaste.

﴾And let those who cannot find a match keep chaste till Allāh gives them independence by His grace﴿ (Qur'ān 24: 33)

❑ What then is the position of one who is married to one wife? He should exercise more self-restraint and chastity. It is usual for many children to come with many wives and Islām makes it obligatory to observe justice among the children in the matter of education, kind treatment and maintenance, no matter if their mothers happen to be different. The saying goes: "Allāh (ﷻ) curses the person who makes his child recalcitrant.[1] The polygamous father should, therefore, be aware of the consequences of showing disproportionate affection.

❑ Similarly, Islām makes it obligatory to observe justice among the wives. Even though one may not be able to control the leanings of one's heart, yet there are other actions and circumstances in which the husband can keep within the limits of the *Shari'ah*, observe equity and fear Allāh (ﷻ) in regard to the people and wealth which He (ﷻ) has placed under his care.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Surely Allāh (ﷻ) will ask every man about what He has placed under his care, whether he preserved it or destroyed it.[2] He also said: "It is enough sin for a man that he should cause those whom he maintains to perish.[3] These are the limits of justice which Allāh (ﷻ) has placed on polygamy and anyone who can bear the burdens thereof may marry two or three or four if he so wishes, otherwise let him be content with one only: "And if you fear you may not deal justly, then one."

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[1] I do not know it. Something similar was transmitted by Al Ṭabarānī on the authority of Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Help your children to be sinless. Whoever wishes can extract disobedience from his child." However, the chain contains unknown narrators.

[2] Ascribed to Al Nasā'ī though I have not found it in his *Al Sunan al Ṣughra*, so perhaps it is in his *Al Sunan al Kubrā*, which is not published.

[3] A different wording is quoted here but with the same meaning.
Transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and others on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ). Al Ḥākim authenticated it. Muslim narrated a similar version by another chain from the same authority.

❑ I have read where some journalists object to the principles of polygamy by asking why is it that men are allowed more than one wife while women are not allowed more than one husband? I have looked at these questioners and have found that the majority of them are either licentious, or pimps-or-procurers of women. I was surprised that they were living in a world of sin and yet they hated most strongly that families should be established on the basis of chastity.

❑ The answer to this sick question is that the ultimate goal of sexual relationship is to establish a family and to bring up children in a clean atmosphere. This is not possible in the home of a woman who is frequented by a number of men, and who does not know which of them is the father of her children. Moreover, the role of the woman in the sphere of sexual relationships is that of the recipient, not the giver; the led, not the leader. One can imagine an engine pulling four coaches, but not a coach pulling four engines. It is a denial of the nature of things to argue that men are not the guardians of women.

❑ It is indeed sad that the masses have chosen to ignore these limits and have gone in for polygamy without being conscious of the meaning and application of the prescribed justice. In fact, they have responded to the call of lust even if it leads them to repeated violations and clear injustice. For example, a man may be incapable of supporting himself yet he struggles to get married; and another may be incapable of supporting one and yet he looks for a second. Someone may fail to fulfil his children's need for education, or he may distribute his wealth according to his whims, while still another may marry a second wife to abandon the first. One may see a man who is capable of supporting four as well as their children, yet he lives on sexual beggary and enjoys the company of disreputable women. What is the cure for this mess? Will the outlawing of polygamy save the *Ummah* from these diseases? Of course not. To restrict the permissible is proof of one's lack of understanding of Islāmic law.

❑ However, if Islām had remained silent on the matter of polygamy then it would have been our duty to give our opinion, and in that case we should have been in favour of it in the interest of public welfare, which we have explained in the beginning of this discussion. However, the fixing of the rule is one thing, and its misapplication is another matter. When legislation has to be applied to reform our society and straighten its crookedness in this regard, then let the legislators turn their energies towards ensuring that justice is done in all its aspects. Meanwhile, it is a waste of time and a futile exercise to argue over the principle of polygamy itself.

❑ I can confidently say that this is one of the effects of the modern crusade against the Islāmic countries, because Christianity alone of all the religions since the time of Nooh (ﷺ) has prohibited polygamy.[4] It has restricted all men, whatever their status, to one wife only, and then left society to battle with the problems of excess women and the raging of basic instincts by any other means it can muster. In many circles now polygamy is regarded as a vice, whereas adultery is regarded as a trivial pastime. The problem which exists now is that of religion and morals in their entirety, and under such circumstances the efforts to stop polygamy is a disgusting attempt to pollute society at the expense of Islām and in the name of the law.

❑ A large number of prophets and righteous people married one or more than one wife, and that did not lessen their piety in the least. The pages of the Old Testament which we have with us today are a testimony to this fact. Islām does not consider abstinence from sex as a form of worship, as the monks do, nor does it consider marriage to four as a sin, as is ascribed to Christianity. Sin arises when the sexual instinct is left to roam freely or is suppressed so that it finds other outlets, like the subterranean waters.

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[4] We believe that polygamy is a law of Allāh (ﷻ) in all religions including Christianity, and we give no importance to any man-made laws beside this.

❑ What is recorded in the authentic biographies of the Prophet (ﷺ) is that he married Khadījah when he was 25 years old and she was 40. He remained with her, not marrying any other, until the noble lady was over 65. She died when he was just over 50 years of age. Not one of his staunchest opponents dared to accuse him of any immorality or indecency, and in this period of his life, the most active and crowded of any man's, the star of chastity and nobility shone on his forehead wherever he went.

❑ If he had wanted to marry another there was no law nor reason nor custom to stop him. Polygamy was a tradition among the Arabs, known as part of the religion of the father of prophets, Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام), on whom be peace. Nevertheless, he contented himself with one in whom he could find solace and comfort, even though she was in her old age while he was at the peak of manhood. This attitude is of great significance.

❑ When Khadījah died and the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to remarry, beauty was not the criterion by which he selected his life partner, or life partners. Even if he had done so, he would not have been criticized. His main consideration was to strengthen his ties with those men who had dedicated their lives to his message and *da'wah*. He chose 'Ā'ishah, the daughter of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), in spite of her tender age, and he chose Ḥafṣah, the daughter of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), in spite of her lack of beauty. Then he chose Umm Slalmah, the widow of his commander who was martyred in the way of Allāh (ﷻ), and along with him his wife had suffered greatly in migrating to Abyssinia, and then from Abyssinia to Madīnah. Before her was Sawdah, a woman who had given up the idea of marriage because of her old age. Life with these four was not expected to be full of fun and joy, and if it was, there was no blame on the Prophet (ﷺ) for that. Every believer has their right to enjoy the company of his wives, and there is no doubt that the Prophet (ﷺ) did in fact treat them equally.

❑ You may say: However, the Prophet (ﷺ) died and left nine wives. How did this happen, and how could he have what others could not? Is this not an opening to the door of lust and a response to the call of pleasure?

❑ In answer to that we say: Is there any place for pleasure in the life of a man who never rested a single day from the toil of constant struggle and exhausting *jihād*? Surely the few personalities of great importance are so fully occupied with the problems of the people that they hardly enjoy an hour's rest except to recuperate a little before resuming their endless toil. What then would have been the situation of the greatest of prophets, who met with the kind of reception from the Arabs as we have indicated?

❑ We also say: What place does pleasure have in the life of a man who rejected it in his youth? How could he immerse himself in it as an old man? Surely the conditions surrounding the other five wives made living with them a part of the burden that the Prophet had to bear in his capacity as head of state, who was responsible for the community and every individual in it. It was also a part of the responsibility he had of establishing good and eradicating evil.

❑ Take, for example, his marriage with Zaynab bint Jaḥsh: this marriage was a severe test for the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh (ﷻ) had ordered him to enter into it to destroy a tradition which was widespread among the Arabs, and he went ahead with it full of embarrassment and constraint. Zaynab was one of his cousins, whom he had known from childhood. He had wished to marry her to Zayd ibn Ḥārithah. However, she had disliked the idea, and her brother had objected to the match owing to his pride in the status of their family. Zaynab was from the Quraish whereas Zayd was a slave whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had freed, and who became his adopted son and was called Zayd ibn Muhammad. The Prophet (ﷺ) had insisted on this marriage because he had wanted to break the Arabs' pride in their lineage, and she had no option but to accept the Prophet's (ﷺ) decision on the matter, especially after the following *Āyāh* (verse) was revealed.

﴾And it does not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allāh and His messenger have decided an affair [for them], that they should [after that] claim any say in their affair.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 36)

❑ Thus she married Zayd, though with reluctance in her heart. Soon he found that he could not live with her and complained to the Prophet (ﷺ), who intervened from time to time to put things right, but to no avail. In these circumstances Allāh (ﷻ) revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) that he should allow Zayd to divorce her and that he should marry her. The Prophet (ﷺ) was seized with great concern at this strange order, and he kept it to himself for fear that people might say that he had married his son's wife, which was not permissible. However, what people would say was exactly what Allāh (ﷻ) wanted to destroy; it was imperative that the Prophet (ﷺ) execute the order, and perhaps he was hoping that Allāh (ﷻ) might relieve him of it. He even went further than that: when Zayd came complaining about his wife and explaining that he intended to divorce her, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him:

﴾Keep your wife to yourself, and fear Allāh.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 37)

❑ Upon this came a Revelation scolding the Prophet (ﷺ) for his hesitation, urging him to carry out Zayd's wish to be separated from his wife and compelling him to marry her instead, even if people raised their voices, saying that he had married his son's divorcee. This was because adoption was a form of falsification which the Arabs held as a tradition and which they were to be forced to abandon. Let the Prophet's (ﷺ) action with himself and those close to him be the first that would destroy the *jahilīyah* of this widespread tradition.

❑ This is the story as Allāh (ﷻ) began to narrate it:

﴾And when you said to him on whom Allāh had conferred favour and you had conferred favour: Keep your wife to yourself, and fear Allāh. And you had in your mind that which Allāh was to bring to light, and you feared mankind whereas Allāh had a better right that you should fear Him. So when Zayd had performed the necessary formality [of divorce] from her, We gave her you in marriage, so that [henceforth] there might be no sin for believers in respect of the

wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have performed the necessary formality [of release] from them. The commandment of Allāh must be fulfilled.› (Qur'ān 33: 37)

❑ The strange thing in this story is what the simpletons have fabricated as a cheap love drama and lustful intrigues. They allege that the Prophet (ﷺ) fell in love with Zaynab and hid feelings. However, it came to light and he married her after she was divorced. They also allege that the first portion of the above-quoted āyah came to reprimand him for this suppressed feeling. We are greatly astonished at this frightful absurdity and the attempt to conceal the truth with falsehood. Who could have prevented Muhammad (ﷺ) from marrying Zaynab if he had so wished? She was his cousin and it was he who gave her in marriage to a man for whom she had no love. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself insisted on this marriage and did his best to make her agreeable to it. Would he, after giving her to someone else, have any designs on her?

❑ Now let us look at the *āyāt* which they allege contains a reprimand to the Prophet (ﷺ). They say that the matter which he kept to himself and which he feared to disclose to the people was his love for Zaynab. In other words, Allāh (ﷻ) scolded him, as they allege, for not disclosing this love. Is it a moral standard that when a man loves a woman he goes around publicizing his love, especially when it happens to be of the perverted type where he loves the wife of another? Would Allāh (ﷻ) reprimand a man for loving another's wife and hiding this love in his heart? Would it raise his status if he composed love poems about her? This is rubbish, by Allāh (ﷻ)! And it is with this rubbish that some foolish people wish to explain the Qur'ān.

❑ Allāh (ﷻ) does not scold anyone for hiding reckless love. The facts of the story are as I have explained. What the Prophet (ﷺ) hid in his heart was his apprehension at this imposed marriage, his delay at executing Allāh's command and his fear of the fuss that people would make when they found that their cherished tradition

of adoption had been destroyed. Nevertheless, Allāh (ﷻ) explained to His Prophet (ﷺ) that he should not allow any imaginary objection to stop him from executing His order, and that he, like the prophets before him, had no choice but to hear and obey.

❑ If you return to the *āyāh* which speaks about the story, you will find it ending with the statement: "The commandment of Allāh (ﷻ) must be fulfilled," then it is followed by two āyāt which emphasize this understanding:

﴾There is no reproach for the Prophet in that which Allāh makes his due. That was Allāh's way with those who passed away of old and the Commandment of Allāh is certain destiny. Who delivered the messages of Allāh and feared Him, and feared none save Allah, Allah keeps good account.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 38-39)

❑ When you want to reassure people, you say, ﴾Fear no-one but Allāh.﴿ You do not tell them this when they are in the act of committing a crime. You tell them only when they are about to undertake a noble action of great virtue which conflicts with inherited traditions. It is clear from these āyāt that Allāh (ﷻ) was not encouraging His Prophet to fall head over heels in love with a woman, but urging him to pluck up his courage to destroy a bad practice which was strongly supported, and that he himself should submit to it. This is why Allāh (ﷻ) says immediately after that:

﴾Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allāh and the seal of the prophets; and Allāh is Aware of all things.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 40)

❑ As for the other ladies whom the Prophet (ﷺ) married, they were of noble origin and could be considered the daughters of kings. Certain circumstances had exposed them to danger when they had accepted Islām which the leader of the *da'wah* could not have afforded to ignore.

❑ Umm Ḥabībah was the daughter of Abū Sufāyn, the chief of the Quraish and its leader in twenty years of war with Islām. She had accepted Islām, defying her father and tribe for the cause of

Allāh (ﷻ), and had migrated to Abyssinia from Makkah, where her father ruled. Do you think that the Prophet (ﷺ) could have left this lady, after the death of her husband, to the vicissitudes of time? He made her his wife in honour of her and in appreciation of her sacrifices for the causes of Allāh (ﷻ).

❑ Ṣafīyah was the daughter of Ḥuyayy, king of the Jews. Her father, brother and husband had perished in the conflict between Islām and Judaism, and she fell to the lot of a soldier who knew only that she was a prisoner of war to be used as he saw fit. If the Prophet (ﷺ) took pity on her and gave her freedom, soothed her wounds and honoured her past by marrying her, could he be blamed for that?

❑ Juwayrīyah was the daughter of Al-Hārith, chief of the Banū al Muṣṭaliq. His tribe had met with defeat at the hands of the Muslims and had all been taken prisoners of war. The Prophet (ﷺ) consoled the dejected leader by marrying his daughter so that he might teach the Muslims how they should behave with nobility and magnanimity. What he had desired by this took place, for freedom returned to the tribe, men and women, when the Muslims felt distressed at having the in-laws of the Prophet as prisoners-of -war.

❑ It may occur to the minds of those who have little knowledge of the *sīrah* that the Prophet's (ﷺ) life was based on abundant food, drink and other pleasures. The picture which may immediately present itself to them of a man who had several wives is that he is immersed in material bliss, that his table is crowded with all sorts of meat, fruit and intoxicating beverages while he enjoys the company of glamorous women and is everyday in a care free mood. This may be more or less the picture of what takes place in the palaces of kings. However, beware of making a fool of yourself by thinking that any bit of this luxurious living was to be found in the houses of the Prophet. Quickly turn your mind to another simple sort of life to see in it a man whose entire concern was for the truth alone, who strove by

knowledge of it and exerted himself to the utmost to gather the people around it, whose pleasure was to be found in the steps which brought him closer to his goal and took him away from worldly lusts.

❑ If cannon-balls on the surface of the earth could reach the far-off stars, only then the temptations of life approach the heart of Muhammad (ﷺ). This was a man who was chosen and purified by Providence, and thus hovered in another world. He said:

"What have I got to do with this world? I am just like a man who rests under the shade of a tree then gets up and leaves it."[5]

His aspirations were towards lofty ideals and to what will be one's fate when one returns to Allāh (ﷻ): "The spot where a whip falls in paradise is better than the world and what it contains, and a morning's or evening's walk in the path of Allāh (ﷻ) is better than the world and what it contains."[6]

❑ His life with his wives was an austere path which no-one could bear. Bukhārī transmitted on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik (ؓ): "I do not know the Prophet (ﷺ) to have seen flat loaf of bread before he passed away, nor did he ever see Sumayt with his own eyes."

❑ 'Ā'ishah reported: "We used to look at the new moon-three moons in two months and no fire (for food) was lit in the Prophet's (ﷺ) homes."

'Urwah ibn al Zubayr asked her: "What did he give you to eat?"

She replied: "The two black things: dates and water." 'Ā'ishah also reported: "Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) died, and in my cupboard there was no meat to eat. There was only a piece of barley-bread in one of my shelves."

❑ As for the bed on which he used to sleep, it was made of skin stuffed with fibre.[7]

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[5] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Al Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd.

[6] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Transmitted completely by Al Bukhārī and the second half by Muslim on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd.

[7] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

He would settle down on it, and no sooner had it warmed him a little than the cock would crow, and he would arise in preparation for the morning prayers.

❑ By this description we do not mean to say that Islām abhors the good things of life or that the Prophet (ﷺ) was setting an example for the people to abandon them. The *Sharī'ah* is plain and evident on this matter. We are only presenting the facts of the life of a man who had no desire for the things over which people kill themselves. A man gives a toy to his small children, which they enjoy and over which they fight one another but the nature of his manhood keeps him apart from children's play. Some scientists and thinkers forget the food which is prepared for them, not in contempt of it but because their thought are fully immersed in their subjects. I can almost see the Prophet (ﷺ) as he looked at the masses of people fighting over fleeting pleasures, shaking his head and saying: "If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much."[8] Then he would supplicate to Allāh (ﷻ): "O Allāh (ﷻ), provide Muhammad's (ﷺ) family with nourishment."[9] It is contempt for the intellect and a blatant injustice to history that an outsider should see or hear that Muhammad (ﷺ) had many wives, and, on the basis of that, conclude that it is proof of indulgence in pleasure and gratification of lust.

❑ On the other hand, no one should think that this simple life was because he could not do better, and that if Muhammad (ﷺ) had had the opportunity of a luxurious lifestyle, he would have enjoyed himself and hoarded wealth, and his wives would have enjoyed themselves, and hoarded wealth likewise. No. He had the power to keep for himself some of the wealth which passed through his hands and over which he had control. However, the

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[8] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) and Anas (رضي الله عنه).

[9] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī and Muslim. The wording is the latter's. It is not the completion of the above Ḥadīth as the author's words indicate. The two are independent ḥādīths and it is not known which one was said first.

magnanimous Prophet was above the desire for small pleasures because his eyes were fixed on a higher goal. If he had been granted the treasures of the earth, his first thought would have been to satisfy the needs of people before anything else.

❑ Abū Dharr said:

"I was walking with the Prophet (ﷺ) in the lava field close to Madīnah. We turned Uḥud and he said: "Abū Dharr."

I answered, and he continued: "I should not like to have the like of Mount Uḥud gold and after three days I still have a dinar from it in my possession except a little to pay off a debt. I should give it away to Allāh's (ﷻ) servants like this and this." He pointed to his right and left as well as behind him. He walked for a while and then said: "Those with more will be the ones with less on the Day of Judgement except those who do such-and such, he pointed to his right and left and behind him, "and they are indeed few."[10]

❑ The tastiest food in the mouth of a satiated person gives no pleasure. The Prophet (ﷺ) was satiated in his heart, and the glitter of the world to which others would hasten could not move a hair on his head. No wonder, therefore, that he distributed whatever reached him to the needy and the expectant while his richness was in his heart. This is the attitude of which Allāh (ﷻ) had spoken when He (ﷻ) said:

﴿**And do not strain your eyes towards that which We cause some wedded pairs among them to enjoy, the flower of the life of the world, with which We may try them. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting. And enjoin upon your people worship, and be constant in it. We do not ask of you a provision: We provide for you. And the sequel is for righteousness.**﴾ (Qur'ān 20: 131-132)

❑ The most that the Prophet (ﷺ) desired was to be saved from the vicissitudes of the world and the injustice of people, and that he and his family would not be humiliated by poverty. He lived

[10] *Saḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs on the authority of Abū Dharr.

by the principle: "What is little and sufficient is better than what is plentiful and distracting."[11] Within the limits of this little and sufficient he wished to be free from the clutches of men, so he used to supplicate to Allāh (ﷻ): "Allāh, surely I seek refuge in You from poverty, hunger and disgrace, from doing wrong [to others] or being wronged and from behaving ignorantly or that others should behave ignorantly to me."[12]

❑ He said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), I ask of You guidance, piety, health and self-sufficiency."[13] This strict way of life forced his wives to bear hardships which they had never known. Most of them had come from luxurious homes and were accustomed in the early part of their lives to good food and plenty of everything, either from their fathers or from their previous husbands. It was no surprise, therefore, that they should become restless at this new life and seek ease and comfort. They gathered together, in spite of the little differences they had, to ask the Prophet (ﷺ) for an increase in their allowances. They were in the home of the greatest man among the Arabs, and so their lifestyle should be at par with their status. Those who took the leading role in these demands were 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah, and the others followed them.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) was greatly upset by this demonstration. He was the first Muslim on the surface of the earth and all the eyes of the believers, men and women, were focussed on him from every direction as he was in the process of building a nation which had

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[11] This is Ḥadīths of the Prophet (ﷺ), transmitted with a sound chain, and this ought to have been mentioned. Transmitted by Aḥmad and Al Ṭayalisi on the authority of Abū Darda. The chain is sound in accordance with the criteria of Muslim.

[12] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: it is composed of two ḥadīths. The first one on the authority of Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ) without the words "hunger" or "from behaving ignorantly..". The other is on the authority of Umm Salmah, who says: "The Prophet (ﷺ) never left my home without raising his head to the sky and saying: "Allāh (ﷻ), I seek refuge in you from going astray or being misguided, from slipping or being made to slip, from wronging or being wronged and from behaving ignorantly or having others behaving ignorantly towards me."

[13] *Ṣaḥīḥ* with the word "chastity" instead of "health", narrated by Muslim, Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd.

to struggle on its way through hordes of enemies lying in wait. If his household did not live the life of a fighter who was surrounded, then how could he maintain the struggle and commission the men and women of his *Ummah* to forgo everything in order to press on with this religion until it reached its point of safety? For this reason, the Prophet (ﷺ) refused to answer the demands of his wives to increase their allowances. In his disapproval of their making such a request, he decided to boycott them, and the news spread among the people that the Prophet (ﷺ) had divorced his wives altogether.

❑ Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and 'Umar (ﷺ) were alarmed at this news, for they were both father-in-laws of the Prophet (ﷺ). They went and sought an audience with him to verify the facts. Upon entering, they found him silent and his wives around him despondent. 'Umar (ﷺ) asked him if he had divorced his wives, and he said no.

❑ Nevertheless some lose atmosphere was still pressing heavily on the place, so 'Umar (ﷺ) decided that he would speak to the Prophet (ﷺ) and make him laugh. He said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), if you had seen Zayd's (ﷺ) daughter (his own wife) when she asked me a while ago for an increase in her allowance, and I struck her neck."

The Prophet (ﷺ) laughed until his teeth showed, and then he said: "They are asking me for an increase in their allowances."

Upon this, Abū Bakr (ﷺ) went to 'Ā'ishah and scolded her, and 'Umar (ﷺ) went to Ḥafṣah. Both of them said: "Are you asking the Prophet (ﷺ) for what he does not have?"

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade the two fathers to do anything to their daughters. His wives were repentant.

They said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), We shall not ask Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) after this session, for what he does not have."

The Prophet (ﷺ) nevertheless kept away from them for one month until they were truly repentant. Then Allāh (ﷻ) revealed

the āyāt of Sūrat *al Aḥzāb*, which demanded of them either that they should seek the Hereafter with a Prophet (ﷺ) whose lifestyle was such, or that they should return to their families where they would find fine clothes and tasty food.

❑ This lesson was enough to erase from their minds the last traces of desire which had not passed the stage of eager discussion. They all chose to remain with the Prophet (ﷺ) according to his old principle of "what is little and sufficient is better than what is plentiful and distracting."[14] Thereafter they all lived with him for the cause of *jihād* and *tahajjud*, sacrifice and beneficence, humility and service.

﴾O Prophet! Say to wives: if you desire the world's life and its adornment, come! Shall content you and shall release you in a just manner. But if you desire Allāh and His messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, then indeed, Allāh has prepared for the good among you an immense reward.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 28-29)[15]

❑ They chose Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and the abode of the Hereafter, and they lived with the Prophet (ﷺ) as helpers of the truth and desirous of the reward. With this self-denial in the service of prophethood and disregard of selfish desires, Allāh (ﷻ) raised their status and they became, not the wives of a man seeking pleasure from but partners in a precious, virtuous life, and they earned the title that Allāh (ﷻ) bestowed on them when He (ﷻ) said:

﴾The Prophet is closer to the believers than themselves, and his wives are [as] their mothers.﴿ (Qur'ān 33: 6)

❑ To emphasize this spiritual motherhood, the mothers of the believers were asked to observe strict *ḥijāb* and it was not allowed for any stranger to meet them even accompanied by a

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[14] Already commented on.

[15] Transmitted by Muslim on the authority of Jābir. Bukhārī has a shorter version on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

maḥram.[16] Any questions posed to them on affairs of Islām or worldly matters had to be done from behind a screen, and it was forbidden for anyone to marry any of them after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). This decisive law put a stop to those inquisitive and disagreeable people who frequent the homes of leaders just as it put a stop to those who hoped for glory by marrying those ladies. We find nothing strange in this law, for some of the men had become so bold that one of them even said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) is dead, I'll marry 'Ā'ishah!" It was the Prophet's right that his feeling should be protected and he and his family be guarded from such foolish bedouin.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) did not have a son from his wives. The daughters he had from Khadījah all died while he was still alive, except Fāṭimah. She lived until a few months after him and was the first of his family to follow him to the grave. He did have a son from Maria, who was sent to him as a gift by the Patriarch of Alexandria and she accepted Islām. He called the boy Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) after his ancestor, the father of prophets. However, he did not live long and died in infancy.

Anas (ﷺ) said: "I saw him giving up his life in front of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). The Prophet's (ﷺ) eyes became wet with tears and he said: "The eyes weep and the heart feels sad but we say nothing but what pleases our Lord, and we are sad for you, Ibrāhīm (ﷺ)'."[17]

❑ It so happened that there was an eclipse of the sun on the same day, and the people said that it was because of the death of the Prophet's (ﷺ) son. Upon this, the Prophet (ﷺ) stood up amid the people and said: "O people, the sun and the moon are signs of Allāh (ﷻ), and they do not eclipse at the death of any human being. Whenever you see it occurring, offer prayers (*ṣalāh*) until the eclipse is over."[18]

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[16] *Maḥram*: a close relative with whom marriage is prohibited.

[17] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of Anas (ﷺ).

[18] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs on the authority of Al Mughīrah ibn Shubah. It is also narrated with authentic chains from a number of *Ṣaḥabah*.

Settling Down

The dust of *jahilīyah* cleared from the horizons of the Arabian peninsula just as the remains of the night clear away at the coming of the rays of dawn. The minds of the conscientious were awakened to fear, and hope in none but Allāh (ﷻ) was heard penetrating the air of the desert which had been revived by the new faith. The teachers of the Qur'ān set out to the north and south, reciting the āyāt of the Book, establishing the laws of Allāh (ﷻ), and teaching the Arabs what neither they nor their fathers had known.

❑ This peninsula had never had such a blessed renaissance nor had its history seen such unique days ever since civilization rose upon it. The Prophet (ﷺ) would receive the deputations in Madīnah and bid them farewell, having imbued them with some of his spirit and provisioned them with his dazzling wisdom. They would return from where they came to build strongholds for Islām in those far-flung places and to turn over clean pages in the history of their tribes.

❑ He did not, however, content himself with receiving guests. He also sent his close Companions to the south to increase the sway of Islām in those parts. In Yemen and its environs there lived densely populated tribes and the People of the previous Scriptures had established activities among them. Islām had indeed spread and taken root there and the shadow of Persia had shrunk to the point of no return. These far-off places needed constant attention, however, and so he sent Khālid Ibn al-Walīd, then Mu'ādh ibn Jabal and Abū Mūsa al Ash'arī and 'Alī.[19]

❑ As though a hidden voice had whispered to the Prophet (ﷺ) that his death was impending, he gave instructions to Mu'ādh before sending him off and walked beside his horse as he was leaving for Yemen. He said: "Mu'ādh, perhaps you will not meet me again after this year, and perhaps you will pass by this mosque

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[19] The sending of these four is authentic and recorded by Bukhārī.

of mine and my grave." Mu'ādh wept at the thought of parting from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). Then the Prophet (ﷺ) turned and faced Madīnah, and declared: "The people closest to me are the pious, whoever and wherever they may be."[20] It took place exactly as the Prophet (ﷺ) indicated, for Mu'ādh stayed in Yemen until the Farewell Pilgrimage, and then the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) occurred eighty-one days after the Ḥajj.

❑ The concern for Yemen was justified. There appeared two pretenders in the Banu Ḥanifah who claimed prophethood, though neither of them had any of those manly characteristics or signs of goodness which could attract a handful-of to their side.

Nevertheless, the disease of blind prejudice made a large section of the masses say: "We know that Musaylimah is a liar; however, the liar of Rabī'ah is better than the truthful of Mudar." The strife caused by the false prophets blazed for a while until it was extinguished by the *Mujāhidin*, and the prophethood of Musaylimah and others like him disappeared as the urine of sheep disappears into the surface of the earth.

The Farewell Pilgrimage

The Prophet (ﷺ) announced his intention to make the pilgrimage so that anyone who wished might accompany him. He left Madīnah towards the end of *Dhul Qi'dah*, having appointed Abū Dajānah to be in charge of the city.[21] The Ḥajj this time was contrary to what the Arabs had been accustomed to in their days of *jahilīyah*. The treaties with the idolaters had come to an end and it was forbidden for them to enter the Sacred Mosque. Thus all the delegations who came were monotheists who worshipped no-one besides Allāh (ﷻ). They came with the knowledge that this year their leader on the pilgrimage and teacher of their rites would be none other than the Prophet (ﷺ) himself.

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[20] *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Transmitted by Aḥmad on the authority of Mu'ādh.

[21] I have not found any chain for this statement. Ibn Hishām mentioned it but not with certainty. He said: "He made Abū Dajānah al Sa'idī the one in charge of Madīnah, or Ṣiba Ibn 'Arfatah a-Ghifārī, as is said."

❑ Looking at the teeming thousands as they answered the call of Allāh (ﷻ) and hastened to obey Him, the Prophet's (ﷺ) heart felt satisfied that they had submitted to the truth. He resolved to implant in their souls the essentials of the faith, to use the occasion of this blessed gathering to dispel the last vestiges of *jahilīyah* which might have lingered in their minds, and to emphasize the morals, relations and laws which Islām insisted on establishing. He delivered the following comprehensive sermon.[22]

❑ "O people, listen to what I say for I do not know whether I shall meet you again after this year.

❑ O people, surely your lives and properties are inviolable to one another until you meet your Lord, just like the inviolability of this day of yours and this month of yours; and surely you are going to meet your Lord and He will ask you about your deeds. I have conveyed my message.

❑ Whoever has a trust must return it to the person who entrusted him with it. Interest is to be laid aside, though you may have your capital, neither wronging nor being wronged. Allāh (ﷻ) has decreed that there should be no interest, and all the interest of Al-Abbās ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭalib is to be relinquished.

❑ And surely all the feuds of the days of *jahilīyah* are to be laid aside, and the first of your feuds which I forgo is the blood of Rabi'ah ibn al Hārith ibn 'Abdul Muṭṭālib, who was fostered by the Banū Layth and murdered by Hudhayl. It is the first of the feuds of *jahilīyah* with which I begin.

❑ Furthermore, O people, indeed Satan has despaired forever of being worshipped in this land of yours. Nevertheless, if he can be obeyed in anything short of worship he will be pleased with it, such as those deeds of yours which you hold of little significance. So beware of him as regards your religion. O people:

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[22] Transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq without a chain. Its chain comes in scattered ḥādīths, which are too many to explain here. The details are in my forthcoming book The Farewell Pilgrimage, if Allāh (ﷻ) allows me to complete it.

﴾Postponement [of a sacred month] is only an excess of disbelief whereby those who disbelieve are misled; they allow it one year and forbid it [another] year, that they may make up the number of months which Allāh has hallowed, so they allow that which Allāh has forbidden.﴿ (Qur'ān 9: 37)

" Time has completed its cycle, and is as it was on the day Allāh (ﷻ) created the heavens and the earth, and surely the number of months with Allāh (ﷻ) is twelve, of which four are sacred: three consecutive months and Rajab which is between Jumada and Sha'bān."

❑ "Furthermore, O people, you have rights over your wives and they have rights over you. Your right over them is that they should not defile your beds and that they should not commit any gross indecency. If they do so, then Allāh (ﷻ) has permitted you to forsake their beds and beat them, without severity. If they desist, however, then they have the right to their food and clothing with kindness. Deal kindly with women, for they are prisoners under your charge and own nothing for themselves. You have taken them only as a trust from Allāh (ﷻ), and you have made them lawful to yourselves by the word of Allāh (ﷻ). So understand what I say, O people, for I have spoken plainly".

❑ "I have left with you something to which if you hold fast, you will never go astray, a plain matter, the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ). O people, listen to what I say and understand it, and know that every Muslim is a Muslim's brother and that the Muslims are brethren. No property of a Muslim is lawful to his brother except what he gives him from the goodness of his heart, so do not wrong yourselves. O Allāh (ﷻ), have I conveyed your message for which I was sent?"

❑ They all said, "Yes, by Allāh (ﷻ)," and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), bear witness."

❑ Ibn Isḥāq says that the man who relayed the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the crowd was Rabī'ah ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "Say: O people, the Messenger (ﷺ) says, do you know which month is this?" He would say it and they would say: the inviolable month. Then he would say: "Tell them that Allāh (ﷻ) has made their blood and their properties inviolable till they meet their Lord, just like the inviolability of this month of theirs." Then he would say: "Say: O people, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) says, do you know which town is this?" He would say it and they would reply: the inviolabe town. Then he would say: "Tell them that Allāh (ﷻ) has made their blood and properties inviolable till they meet their Lord, just like the inviolability of this town of theirs." Then he would say: "Say: O people, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) says, do you know which day this is?" He would tell them and they would say: "the day of the Greater Pilgrimage." Then he would tell him to say that Allāh (ﷻ) had made their blood and their properties inviolable till they meet their Lord just like the inviolability of that day of theirs.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) wanted having suffered long to convey the message to pour whatever advice he had into the ears and hearts of the People. He was aware that this gathering would go alone into the wilderness of life, and so he cried out to them just as a father cries out words of advice to his son who is departing on a train. This good-hearted Prophet (ﷺ) would always renew the cries of warning. Whenever he feared of Satan's schemes against the mankind, and would arouse in them the deepest feelings of consciousness, then offer guidance and knowledge. By this means, he would remove any pretexts, and in the end he would extract a testimony from the people against themselves and him, that they had listened and that he had conveyed that for which he was sent. He had spent twenty-three years joining the earth to the heaven, reciting to those near and far the āyāt of the Book with which the Trustworthy Spirit had descended upon his heart, washing away the filth of *jahilīyah* which had polluted everything, and nurturing from among the Arabs a generation which understood these truths and understood the world through them.

❑ Now he was leading the pilgrims in the first Ḥajj purified of idolatry and completely dedicated to Allāh (ﷻ). The One, the Mighty. He addressed the multitudes on his camel in order to emphasize the meanings of his message which he had explained to them and to fulfil the duty placed on his shoulders of conveying and clarifying. He was the answer to the prayer that the father of Prophets, Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), had offered while he was building the Ka'bah:

﴾Our Lord! And raise in their midst a messenger from among them who will recite them your Revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and shall make them grow. Indeed, you, are the Mighty, Wise.﴿ (Qur'ān 2: 129)

❑ The Mighty and Wise manifested Himself with His excellent names over this territory and granted might and wisdom, or say, strength and administration to Muhammad (ﷺ), son of 'Abdullāh, who was able to erase the traces of evil from the face of the earth, and whatever did not melt with patience and forbearance surrendered to discipline and power. This approach which combined justice with mercy caused the domain of falsehood to wither until *jahilīyah* and its pollution disappeared and Islām became established. Then the Arabs, after they were made to submit, listened to the final voice of truth in the Farewell pilgrimage.

❑ On the Day of *'Arafah* of this great pilgrimage Allāh (ﷻ) revealed this āyah:

﴾This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour to you and have chosen for you as your religion Al-Islam﴿ (Qur'ān 5: 3)

❑ When 'Umar (ﷺ) heard it he wept. He was asked what made him weep and he replied: "After perfection there can only be diminution." Probably he felt the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) was near. In truth, some of the expressions which came to the Prophet's (ﷺ) lips contained suggestions that he was bidding farewell to life

and the living. The sermon which he delivered at the pilgrimage contained some of these, and others could be discerned from his teachings to the crowds who were gathered around him.

For example, at the stoning of the devil he said: "Take from me your rites of pilgrimage for perhaps I shall not make the pilgrimage again after this year."[23]

To Madīnah

Having completed his Ḥajj, the Prophet (ﷺ) hastened back to Madīnah not to take a rest, but to resume his life of struggle and toil for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ). The miscreants will never allow upholders of truth any opportunity to relax, and the latter will not revitalize themselves by ceasing to be active. Their way of gaining strength to work is by the feeling of a sense of duty. Their complete rest will be on the day when they see the fruits of their success ripe for the picking.

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) returned home to mobilize another army for the fight against Rome. The pride of this empire had made it refuse to concede the right of life to Islām and kill any of its followers who fell into its hands. Farwah ibn 'Umar al-Judhāmā was governor or Ma'ān and its environs in Syria on behalf of the Romans were enraged. They attacked him, brought him back and threw him into prison until the sentence of death was pronounced on him. Then they executed him at a waterhole of theirs in Palestine called 'Afrā and left him hanging on the cross as a deterrent to anyone else who might wish to do the same.

It is said that when he was about to be hanged he recited this couplet of poetry: 'Tell the head of the Muslims that I have surrendered to my Lord my bones and my blood."

❑ Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) equipped a huge army, made Usāmah ibn Zayd its commander and ordered him to take his cavalry to the borders of Al-Balqā and Al Dārūm in Palestine, as a show of might against the Romans, and to restore confidence to the hearts

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[23] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Muslim and others on the authority of Jābir (ؓ).

of the Arabs who lived on the borders. No-one should think that there was nothing to stop the excesses of the Church and that acceptance of Islām led to inevitable death.

❑ Since Usāmah was only 18 years old, some ignorant people were offended at his appointment and objected to his leading the more experienced men. There is no doubt that in choosing personnel the Prophet (ﷺ) looked only at competence, and whomever he found to be competent for a post he would put him there without considering his age. Age does not give intellect to the foolish, and youthfulness does not detract from the virtue of the pious.

Thus in reply to the critics the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "If you object to my appointing Usāmah as commander, then you must have objected before to my appointing his father. By Allāh (ﷻ), he was fit to be in that post, and his son after him is fit to be in it, and he was one of the dearest people to me."[24]

❑ Many therefore flocked around Usāmah and enlisted in his army, except that the disturbing news of the Prophet's (ﷺ) illness forced them to delay their march so as to see what would be Allāh's decree in this matter.

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[24] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar.

Chapter Nine

THE COMPANION ON HIGH

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) felt the pains of the sickness which had attacked him since the ending of *Ṣafar* of the eleventh year. It began with sharp headaches which he endured in patience in the house of his wife, Maymūnah, and the pain increased so much that he could not go out. His wives then allowed him to convalesce in the house of 'Ā'ishah, because they saw he would be comfortable under her care. He was taken from Mumūnah's house by Al-Faḍl ibn al 'Abbās and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The illness had sapped his strength and he was unable to walk. Holding onto them for support and with his head bandaged, he dragged his feet along the ground until he reached 'Ā'ishah's house.[1] The illness grew more sever and the temperature in his body rose to a high level.

He called for water to cool himself with, plenty of water: "Pour over me seven skins of water from different wells!" 'Ā'ishah said that they put him in a tub belonging to Ḥafṣah and poured water over him until he asked them to stop.[2]

❑ When the Prophet (ﷺ) felt that the heat of the fever had left him he called his cousin, Al Faḍl ibn Al-'Abbās, and asked him to take him by the hand. He was shivering and his head was still bandaged. Al Faḍl reported that he took him by his hand and they entered the mosque and he sat on the pulpit. Then he asked him to call the people and they gathered around him. It was an afternoon clouded with gloom. The people craned their necks to see the man who had revived their dead hearts and taken them and their families out of darkness into light. They saw that he

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[1] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Ibn Hishām transmitted it from Ibn Isḥāq with an authentic chain on the authority of 'Ā'ishah. Al-Ḥākim transmitted it with another chain from her and authenticated it.

[2] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Ibn Ishaq with the same chain as above. It is also in Bukhārī and Muslim.

was worn out. The health in his body was being defeated by the unrelenting march of illness. Nevertheless, he spoke to them and taught them as they were accustomed from him and they listened attentively to him. When he felt his death was imminent, he wished to meet Allāh (ﷻ) with there being no human who would hold him for injustice. He was always particular about justice in all his affairs. However, who knows, perhaps he had slipped just as any other man, or erred and caused injustice while he used to declare his disapproval of injustice and its perpetrators. He should, therefore, address the people on this so that his conscience might be at ease.

❑ He said:

"O people, I praise Allāh (ﷻ), because there is no other god. Whose back I have whipped, here is my back, let him retaliate. Whose reputation I have stained, here is my reputation, so let him retaliate. Being in grudge is not my nature of character, and the most beloved of you to me is the one who takes his right from me, If he has any, and relieves me of it so that I may meet Allāh (ﷻ) with a clear conscience. I think, though, that this will not suffice me unless I insist on asking you again and again."

❑ Al Faḍl said that he came down and offered *Zuhr* prayer. Then he sat on the pulpit again and repeated his statement about grudge etc.

Then a man stood up and said: " O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), you have three *dirhams* for me."

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Faḍl, give them to him." Then he said: "O people, whoever has anything let him hand it over, and he should not say 'humiliation of the world' for the humiliation of the world is lighter than the humiliation of the hereafter."

❑ A man stood up and said; "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I have three dirhams which I appropriated from the spoils of war." "Why did you appropriate them?" asked the Prophet (ﷺ).
He replied: "I was in need of them."

"Faḍl," said the Prophet (ﷺ), "take them from him." Then

he said: "Whoever fears something in himself, let him stand up and I shall supplicate for him."

A man stood up and said: "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I am a liar, I am foul-mouthed, I sleep a lot."

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O Allāh (ﷻ), grant him truthfulness and faith, and take the sleep away from him."

❑ Another man stood up and said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I am a liar and a hypocrite and there is no sin which I have not committed."

'Umar (ﷺ) stood up and said: "You have disgraced yourself."

❑ Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O son of Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ), the disgrace of the world is lighter than the disgrace of the hereafter. O Allāh (ﷻ), grant him truthfulness and faith and direct his affairs to goodness."[3]

❑ The Prophet (ﷺ) returned to his house adjacent to the mosque to sleep in the sickbed, though he was never accustomed to recline or find peace in it. There were many affairs awaiting his attention but the burdens of the illness kept him confined to bed. On the few occasions when he felt better he would go to the mosque to cast a final eye over the nation which he had built and the men whom he loved.

Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī said that the Prophet (ﷺ) sat on the pulpit one day and said: Indeed, a slave was given the choice by Allāh (ﷻ) between having anything that he desired from the attractions of the world and having what was with Allāh (ﷻ), and he chose that which was with Allāh (ﷻ)."

Abū Bakr (ﷺ) wept and said: "May our fathers and mothers be your ransom, Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)."

Abū Sa'īd says that people were astonished at him and they said: "Look at this old man. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) tells about a slave who is given a choice and he says 'May our fathers and

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[3] Weak: transmitted by Al-'Uqailī in his collection of weak ḥādīths also by Al-Bayhaqī. Al Dhahabi said: "I am afraid it may be a fabricated lie." Ibn Kathīr says: "In its *isnād* and *matn* there is extreme obscurity."

mothers be your ransom!" In fact," Abū Sa'id continued: "Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was the one to be given the choice though only Abū Bakr (ؓ) knew that among all of us. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'The most benevolent of people to me in his companionship and wealth is Abū Bakr (ؓ), and If I were to take a friend I should take Abū Bakr (ؓ) as a friend, but for the brotherhood of Islām."

In another version he said: "but for the companionship and the brotherhood of faith until Allāh (ﷻ) unites us in His Presence."[4]

❑ During the period of his sickness there were times when he felt relieved and the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) thought that their wish had come true and that he would soon be up and able to resume his struggle for the cause of Allāh (ﷻ) and shower his affection, companionship and mercy on them.

Abdullāh ibn Ka'b ibn Mālik says that Ibn Abbās informed him that when 'Alī came out from the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) during the days of his last illness, the people asked: "O Abul Ḥasan, how is Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) this morning?" He replied: "He is well, by the grace of Allāh (ﷻ)."

Al Abbās took hold of his hand and said: "Don't you see? In three days time you'll be in a critical position. I think that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) will die of this illness of his, and I know the faces of the sons of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib when death comes. Go to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and ask him who will the authority be vested in. If it is with us we shall know that, and if not he will enjoin justice upon us.

'Alī said: "By Allāh (ﷻ), if we ask Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) about it and he forbids it to us, the people will never give it to us. By Allāh (ﷻ), I shall never ask it of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)."[5]

❑ It is evident that Al 'Abbās meant the *khilāfah*. He had felt that

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[4] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs. This is the version of Bukhārī.

[5] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī.

the Prophet (ﷺ) was on his deathbed, and his experience with his relatives at the point of death enabled him to guess their future accurately. Since he was the head of the Banū Hāshim he was anxious to know who would be the leader of the people after the Prophet's (ﷺ) death. He turned to 'Alī and disclosed his secret concern to him because 'Alī was to be considered the first candidate among the Banū Hāshim for this post, owing to his excellent past, his competence, his status with the people and his closeness to the Prophet (ﷺ). 'Ali, however, was unwilling to speak to the Prophet (ﷺ) on this matter and chose to leave it to the consensus of the Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself had considered writing a testament to prevent a dispute among those who aspired to leadership. Then he changed his mind and decided to let the Muslims choose whom they loved as their leader.[6]

❑ The sickness increased and the Prophet (ﷺ) suffered intense pain to such an extent that his daughter, Fāṭimah, was distressed at the severity of his suffering and exclaimed: "Oh, the torment of my father!"

However, he soothed her, saying: "There will be no more torment for your father after today."[7] The news flew to Usāmah's army and there were sorrow and confusion in the ranks.

Muhammad ibn Usāmah narrated from his father: "When Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) took a turn for the worse, I and the people with me returned to Madīnah and went in to see the Prophet (ﷺ). He was silent and could not speak. He began to raise his hand to heaven and put it on me, and I knew he was supplicating for me."[8]

❑ Once he fainted and his family put medicine in his mouth. When

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[6] This refers to the Ḥadīth transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet (ﷺ) said. "Come let me write a scroll for you."

[7] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī and others on the authority of Anas (ﷺ).

[8] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Al Tirmidhī and Ibn Hishām.

he awoke he showed his dislike of that.[9] At his side was bowl of water in which he would immerse his hand and wipe his face. Then he would say: "O Allāh (ﷻ), help me in the pangs of death.[10]

❑ When he was unable to lead the people in prayer, he called on Abū Bakr (ﷺ) to do so.

'Ā'ishah was afraid that the people would begin to hate her father and see in him a bad omen, so she objected, saying: "Abū Bakr (ﷺ) is a delicate man, and when he stands in your place he will break down."

Nevertheless, the Prophet (ﷺ) insisted on him, saying: "Order Abū Bakr (ﷺ) to lead the people in prayer."

'Āishah repeated her objection and the Prophet (ﷺ) became angry and said: "You are Yusuf's companions. Order Abū Bakr (ﷺ) to lead the people in prayer."[11] Abū Bakr (ﷺ) led seventeen prayers with the people.

❑ The days on which the Prophet (ﷺ) was unable to lead the Muslims in prayer were the worst for him. In an authentic Ḥadīth he said: "Truly I feel the pangs of illness just as two men among you do."[12]

In spite of his high temperature and the weakness of his body, he, nevertheless, remained fully alert and concerned about his teachings, and eager to remind the people of them. He feared that his *Ummah* might degenerate and become attached to personalities and tombs, as People of the Book had degenerated before.

❑ His intense commitment to *tawhīd* (monotheism) is what made him, even in the throes of death, continue warning the Muslims of this pitfall. 'Ā'ishah and Ibn 'Abbās both reported

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[9] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

[10] Weak: transmitted by Al Tirmidhī and others by way of Mūsā Ibn Sirjis from Al-Qāsim Ibn Muhammad from 'Ā'ishah. He said it was weak because this Mūsā was unknown.

[11] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by the two Sheikhs on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

[12] Transmitted by the two Sheikhs and others on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd.

that during his illness the Prophet (ﷺ) would throw a cloth over his face, and when he felt worried he would remove it from his face and say, "Allāh's curse be upon the Jews and Christians: they took their Prophet's (ﷺ) graves as mosques." He was warning against their behaviour.[13]

❑ He feared that his *Ummah* might be carried away by allurements and pride. Those who follow allurements forget their prayers, and those who follow pride act tyrannically over those who are under their care, such as servants and employees. The nation which is ruled by these passions is not fit for life nor is life fit for it. Moreover, it is easy for Allāh (ﷻ) to leave them to receive the just recompense for what they do, which is humiliation in the world and chastisement in the Hereafter. This fear led the Prophet (ﷺ) as he was breathing his last to draw the attention of Muslims to the whereabouts of goodness so that they might hold fast to it.

❑ Anas ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"Most of the advice of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) when death was upon him, was prayers and what one's right hand possessed. Even his chest gurgled this while his tongue could hardly pronounce it."[14]

❑ Sometimes he was overcome with the urge to be present in the congregation and see his Companions in his last days, So he would exert his worn out body and go into the mosque from 'Ā'ishah's room and, while seated, lead the people in prayer. Ibn 'Abbās said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) fell sick he ordered Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) to lead the prayers. Then he recovered and went out. When Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) noticed him he wanted to step back. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) signalled to him to remain, and he sat on the left side of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and began to recite wher he left off. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) followed the Prophet (ﷺ) and tl

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[13] Transmitted by the two Sheikhs.

[14] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad and others from Qatādah on the autho Anas (رضي الله عنه).

people followed Abū Bakr (ﷺ)."[15]

❑ Abū Bakr (ﷺ) continued to lead the prayers until the morning of the Prophet's (ﷺ) death. The latter was still concerned about the affairs of his *Ummah*. As though Allāh (ﷻ) wanted to satisfy him about their absolute sincerity, He (ﷻ) granted him the opportunity to see them at the time of his last prayer on earth. The believers came to the mosque at dawn on Monday when he died and assembled for prayer behind an *imam* with a soft recitation and abundant sincerity. The Prophet (ﷺ) lifted the curtain which was hung over 'Ā'ishah's door and appeared in front of the people. They were almost tempted away from their prayer for the joy of seeing him and they began making space for him. However, he signalled with his hand that they should continue the prayer, and he smiled with pleasure at their posture in prayer.

❑ Anas (ﷺ) said: "I had never seen the Prophet (ﷺ) in better form than he was at that moment."[16]

❑ He went back in and the people dispersed, thinking that he had recovered from his illness. Abū Bakr (ﷺ) felt at ease with this thought and went to his wife in Al Sunḥ on the outskirts of Madīnah.[17]

❑ 'Ā'ishah said: "Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) returned from the mosque and lay down in my lap. A male relative of Abū Bakr (ﷺ) came in with a green toothbrush (*miswāk*) in his hand. The Prophet (ﷺ) stared at his hand and I understood that he wanted it. I took it and softened it, then I gave it to him. He brushed his teeth harder than he had ever done before, then he put it down. I felt Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) heavy in my lap and I looked at his face. His eyes were fixed and he was saying: "No, the Companion on high from paradise."

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[15] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.

[16] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: transmitted by Bukhārī, Muslim and others on the authority of Ibn Al Zuhrī from Anas (ﷺ) but it is *Munqaṭi'* (the chain has a missing link.)

[17] It is part of the Ḥadīth of Anas (ﷺ), transmitted by Ibn Isḥāq.

I said (to myself): "You were given the choice and you have chosen, by Him who sent you with the Truth." And the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) passed away.[18]

❑ The terrible news spread from the bereaved home, causing anguish to vision, ears and hearts, and mental turmoil.

The believers felt that the sky over Madīnah had darkened. The pain of the loss left them dazed, not knowing what they were doing. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ), who was confounded by the news, stood up and said: "Some hypocrites are claiming that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) is dead. He is not dead but he has gone to his Lord, just as Mūsā ibn 'Imrān went to his Lord and was away from his people for forty-days. Then he returned after he was said to be dead. By Allāh (ﷻ), the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) shall come back and cut the hands and feet of those who say he is dead."

❑ When Abū Bakr (ﷺ) heard the news he came to the door of the mosque as 'Umar (ﷺ) was speaking though he did not pay any attention to him. He entered 'Ā'ishah's home where the Prophet (ﷺ) was shrouded in a corner. He came up and uncovered his head, then he bent over, kissed him and said: "By my father and mother! You have tasted the death which Allāh (ﷻ) has decreed for you. Now you will never be afflicted with death after that."

❑ He replaced the cloth over the Prophet's (ﷺ) head and went out to the mosque where 'Umar (ﷺ) was still speaking. He said: "'Umar (ﷺ), stop." However 'Umar (ﷺ) continued to be agitated and effusive in his speech. When Abū Bakr (ﷺ) saw him in this state he turned to the people and began to speak, and they left 'Umar (ﷺ) and turned to listen to him. He began by praising

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[18] *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Transmitted by Ibn Hishām from Ibn Isḥāq with a sound chain from 'Ā'ishah. It is also in Bukhārī in separate places. This is the last Ḥadīth in the book and with it ends my annotation. Praise be to Allāh (ﷻ) for bringing it to a successful end. Glory be to you, O Allāh (ﷻ), and with Your praise. I testify that there is no god but You, I seek your forgiveness and I turn to You in repentance. Signed: Muhammad Naṣir-ud-Dīn Al Albānī, Damascus, 28/5/1375 AH.

Allāh (ﷻ), then he said: "O people, whoever worshipped Muhammad (ﷺ) then Muhammad (ﷺ) is dead. But whoever worshipped Allāh (ﷻ), then Allāh (ﷻ) is alive and will never die." Then he recited the following āyah:

﴾Muhammad is but a messenger, messengers [the like of whom] have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn on your heel? He who turns back does no hurt to Allāh, and Allāh will reward the thankful.﴿ (Qur'ān 3: 144)

Epilogue

Within a few days the Prophet's (ﷺ) death Islām became entangled in a fierce struggle with paganism, which suddenly came back to life, and Christianity, which controlled the north of the peninsula, prevented anyone from embracing Islām and stopped its spread by force. The desert had not seen the like of these violent battles during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. The battle fields were wider, the costs higher and the losses greater. Nevertheless, the men whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had brought up with knowledge of the truth and sacrifice for it were sincere in their actions to Allāh (ﷻ) and bore the heavy burdens that were thrust upon their shoulders like gallant heroes. They broke the backbone of paganism in the peninsula, squeezed out its life blood and destroyed it forever. They routed the Romans at the borders where the latter had spread their arrogance. Then they returned to Madīnah not to relax but to spread out in the then populated world in a systematic order and by inspiration from a foolproof law. Within a few years Islām had filled land and sea, ears and eyes.

❑ Now after fourteen centuries have elapsed since that glorious era, Islām is no more ruling its *Ummah*, not to speak of steering the world to a land worth mentioning or to goodness worthy of thanks. The other religions are living on the brink of death, for the existing civilizations do not allow religion to take hold of the reins. Paganism in India and the Far East as well as other places

still holds sway over the major part of the lives and behaviour of the masses. Judaism is segregating its flock from the world implant in their hearts hatred for the mankind and to sweep away the greatest benefits for Israel by playing upon the split within the ranks of the Muslims. Christianity is like a creeping vine in the equator: it depends for its survival on the adoption of the prevalent philosophies and support of the ruling regimes to guarantee life (and what a life!) for its primary tenets of the Trinty and vicarious sacrifice.

❑ The Muslims have been stained with the pollution of deviation and adherence to shells and rituals. The vices of weakness and ignorance have relegated them to a condition similar to those of the Jews and Christians during the era of prophethood and the rightly-guided caliphate. Only an insignificant minority of them remain today fighting *jahilīyah* and holding fast to the truth. If there is hope in the fact that Islām has remained preserved from the theoretical point of view in its two major sources, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, then this preserved knowledge can never make action superfluous. Nevertheless, it should be noted that those who do good work for Islām are encountering severe opposition from various other fronts. I mean the fronts which have opposed its spread since the time of its inception fourteen centuries ago and have never cooled off for one day in their enmity towards it.

❑ One may ask whether world today is in need of Islām. Our answer is that if the world is in need of knowing Allāh (ﷻ) and preparation to meet Him, and give an account for what was done in this earthly life, then it must have Islām. Material advancement is no substitute for adherence to these great realities. One may say: but there are people who do not believe in any God or in the hereafter, and there are others who believe in these things but in a different way from what Islām teaches, so let people follow their own beliefs. Our answer to this is: let people believe what they will. However, the blind do not have the right to dig out the eyes

of those who see or strangle them because the sighted see what the blind do not! They must leave them to walk with the guidance of their eyes and they must leave them also to describe what they see or expect on their way. Whoever wish to follow the sighted without being forced have the right to go with them otherwise they should leave the sighted alone and not put obstacles in their path. This is all that Islām asks.

❑ The mischief-makers hate Islām because it is the truth with a voice which defends itself and proclaims whatever it contains and refuses to hide or keep silent. This characteristic of Islām, the characteristic proclaiming the truth and decrying falsehood, has annoyed its adversaries and made them fabricate accusations against it. Thus, if it refuses to compromise, it is the attacker; and if it refuses to die under the plots of its enemies, it is being spread by force! This is the secret of the tale which is told that Islām was spread by the sword, though Islām only unsheathed the sword to save itself from the danger of the mob and the brigands. Had it not been subjected to intrigue, it would never have lifted a knife and would have contented itself with the use of the tongue instead of the sword. Yes, in this respect it is very firm. What else could be expected of it when it has to confront enemies who are spurred on by the haughtiness and prejudice of many centuries as well as the erring ways which hide behind thick jungles of men and arms? Had it not been for this firmness, Islām's moral and scientific principles would not have remained intact to this day. Those religions before it which had weakened were dragged by their enemies in a hideous manner from their roots and have never been able to return safely to them. As for Islām, today you find it, if not in its adherents, then at least in its Book.

❑ You may think that you have studied the life of Muhammad (ﷺ) by following his history from birth to death, but this is a grave mistake. You will never really understand the *sīrah* unless you study the noble Qur'ān and the purified Sunnah. The amount that you derive from these will tell the strength of your connection with the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām.

Symbols used in this Book

(سبحانه وتعالى) :*Subhānahu wa T'ālā* – 'The Exalted'

(ﷺ) :*Ṣallā-Allāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* – 'Blessings and Peace be upon him'

(عليه السلام) :*'Alayhis-Salām* – 'May Peace be upon him'

(رضي الله عنه) :*Raḍia Allāhu 'Anhū* – 'May Allāh be pleased with him'
:*Raḍia Allāhu 'Anhā* – 'May Allāh be pleased with her'
:*Raḍia Allāhu 'Anhum* – 'May Allāh be pleased with them'

Transliteration Chart

Arabic Letter	Symbol Used
آ – ى	ā or aa
ب	b
ت	t
ة	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	<u>dh</u>
ع	ʻ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q

ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ - ه - ـه	h
و	w
و (as vowel)	ū or oo
ي	y
ي (as vowel)	ī or ee
ء	' (Omitted in initial position)

َ	Fatḥah	a
	Kasrah	i
ُ	Ḍammah	u
ّ	Shaddah	Double letter
ْ	Sukūn	Absence of vowel

Glossary

***Āyāt*:** (sing. āyah) Proofs, signs, verses, etc.

***Adhān*:** Call to *Ṣalāh* (prayer) in specified manner.

***Aḥzāb*:** (sing. *ḥizb*) means groups and parties. Quraish and all anti-Islamic forces, pagan tribes and the Jews of Arabia, formed a confederacy and attacked Madīnah jointly, hence called the battle of the Confederates.

***Al Mizan*:** The balance. Deeds will be measured in the Hereafter for reward or punishment.

***Allāh*:** Personal name of the Creator of the universe. He is 'The Exalted', the *Rabb* (the Lord) of the Worlds.

***Arafah*:** The ninth day of the month *Dhul-Hijjah*, the day pilgrims stay in the plain of *Arafāh* till sun set. This is the major part of Ḥajj. There is no Ḥajj (Pilgrimage) without *Arafāh*.

***Dīn*:** Religion, a complete way of life, ordained by Allāh (ﷻ) for humanity, encompassing all aspects of human life; private, social, religious, political, legal etc.

***Da'wah*:** Mission, Preaching (Invitation to Islām).

***Dhirā'*:** A *dhirā'* is equivalent to a cubit, an ancient linear measure equal to the length of a forearm.

***Dhuhr*:** Noon, Mid-day. Name of the noon *Ṣalāh* (prayer).

***Dhul Qa'dah*:** Eleventh month of the Islamic (*Hijri*) calendar.

***Dinars*:** An ancient gold currency coin.

***Dirham*:** A silver coin weighing 50 grains of barley with cut ends. It is equals to 1/12 of one Uqiyyah of gold in value.

***Ḥanīf*:** Name of Ibrahīm's (Abraham) religion, pure monotheism, wherein Allah alone is worshipped. Another name of Islam.

***Ḥarām*:** Forbidden things as per Islamic faith.

***Hijrah*:** Migration. Specifically used for the migration of the Prophet and the Muslims from Makkah to Madīnah under the commands of the All-Mighty.

***Ḥirā*:** A well-known cave in a mountain near Makkah. The last Prophet (ﷺ) used to contemplate therein before he was assigned prophethood.

***Hijri*:** Name of Era. The Islamic Calendar which has its origin in the Migration of the last Prophet (ﷺ)from Makkah to Madīnah.

***Ḥūr*:** Houris, a creature of Allah for the dwellers of *Jannah*.

***Huffādh*:** (sing. *Hafiz*), people memorizing the Qur'ān.

***Imām*:** Leader. A person who leads the *Ṣalāt* (prayer), authority in Islamic Jurisprudence and extra ordinary scholar of Islamic learning as well as the Muslim caliph (or ruler).

***Isrā'*:** The Prophet's ascension.

***'Issa*:** Jesus (ﷺ).

***Jahilīyyah*:** Ignorance. Non-Islāmic state of affairs. The name given to the pre-Islamic era.

***Janabah*:** The state of impurity. After sexual involvement and/or sexual discharge in a wet dream. A person in such a state should perform *Ghusl* (i.e. have a bath) or do *Taymmum*, if a bath is not possible.

***Jannah*:** Paradise.

Jihād: Holy fighting in the Cause of Allāh (ﷻ) or any other kind of effort to make Allāh's Word (i.e. Islām) supreme. *Jihād* is regarded as one of the fundamentals of Islām.

Jizyah: Head tax for the non-Muslims living under the protection of an Islāmic government. They are exempted from Zakāh and Jihād.

***Jumada* I & II**: The sixth and the seventh months of the Muslim calendar.

Khilāfah: Vicegerent, Deputy. Also Successorship.

Khalīfah: (Plural: *Khulafā*) Successor. A Caliph. An Islāmic term used for rulers of the Muslims after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). The first four Caliphs of Islam are known as *Khulafa al Rashidun.*

Lāt and 'Uzza: Names of two deities of the Pre-Islamic era of *Hijaz*, Arabia, being worshipped during the Period of Ignorance.

Maḥram: A close blood relative with whom marriage is prohibited.

Madīnah: Well-known city in Saudi Arabia, where the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated from Makkah and is buried. It was the centre of Islamic Rule during the Prophet and the early caliphs.

Maghazī: Battles. Books describing the history of war of the early Islamic period are known as *Maghazi*.

Matn: The actual text of the Ḥadīth.

Mir'āj: The ascension of the last Prophet (ﷺ) to the heavens (by soul and body).

Miswāk: A toothbrush made of *Arāk*-tree roots.

Mu'jiza: Miracles. Supernatural occurrence by a prophet of Allah in response to challenge from non-believers.

Mu'adhdhin: One who calls for *Ṣalāt* (Prayer) in the prescribed manner

Mudhammam : The blameworthy antonym of Muhammad.

Maghrib: Sunset. Name of the evening *Ṣalāt* timing (prayer).

Muhajirīn: (sing. *Muhajir*). Emigrants, specially those who migrated from Makkah to Madīnah with the last Prophet (ﷺ).

Muḥarram: The first month of the Muslim calendar.

Mushrikūn: (sing. *Mushrik*) Polytheists. Pagans, idolaters who worship other than one god and/or associate others with Allah.

Nuṭfah: Semen.

Qaṣīdahs: (sing. *Qasidah*) Poems written in praise of some one.

Rak'ah: (plural *Rak'āt*) Unit. The *Ṣalāt* (prayer) of Muslims contains a number of units, each unit consists of one standing, one bowing and two prostrations.

Ramaḍān: The ninth month of the Muslim Calendar. This is the month of *Saum* (fasting). The Noble Qur'ān started to be revealed. The first decisive battle in the history of Islam, battle of Badr occurred in this month.

Ṣalāh: Prayer. Islamic terminology of Prayer invoking Allah's Blessings in the prescribed form.

Ṣaḥābī: (Plural. *Ṣaḥabah*) Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Riḍwan: Pleasure. On the occasion of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, Uthman ibn Affan was sent to Makkah for negotiations. He was held up there for some time. It was said that he is martyred by the Quraish there. The Prophet (ﷺ) took oath from the believers to fight to the last in retaliation thereof. It is known as *Bayt al Riḍwān*.

***Sīrah*:** Life, Biography. Generally the Biography of the Prophet (ﷺ).

***Sūrah* :** (Plural: *Sūrahs*).Chapter of the Holy Qur'ān. It is divided into 114 *Sūrahs*.

***Safā*:** The name of a mount near the K'abah. Pilgrim starts his Sayee ritual from this mountain and goes up to *Marwa*, another mount near the K'abah and facing *Safa*.

***Salām*:** means peace. It is used for greeting.

***Salāsil*:** Chains. The Roman army facing the Muslims are reported to be bound in chains so that they do not run away from the war.

***Sha'bān*:** The eight month of the Muslim calendar.

***Shari'ah* :** Religious, legal and moral code.

***Shawwāl*:** The tenth month of the Muslim calendar.

***Subhānallāh*:** Glorified is Allāh.

***Tahajjud* :** Literally waking after sleep at night. It is the name of an optional prayer offered at any time after *'Isha* and before the *Fajr* prayer.

***Tawhīd*:** The belief in the oneness of the Creator.

***Tayammum*:** It is a means of attaining purification for Prayers in place of *Wuḍu* (ablution) and/or *Ghusl* (bath) when water is not available or water is injurious for health.

***Uḥud*:** A well-known mountain in Madīnah. One of the great battles in the Islāmic history took place at its foot known as battle of Uḥud.

***Ulama*:** (sing. *'alim*) Scholars, learned people.

Ummah: Nation. The Muslim community as a whole is termed as Muslim Ummah.

Umrah: Minor pilgrimage. It can be performed any time throughout the year and in any number of times.

Uqiyah: A measurement specially for gold and silver.

Zakāt al fiṭr: *Zākat* for fasting in the month of Ramaḍān. Every Muslim, adult or child, male or female, rich or poor has to pay it before going to offer *Idd* prayer.

Zamzam: The sacred well inside the *Haram* (the grand mosque) at Makkah.